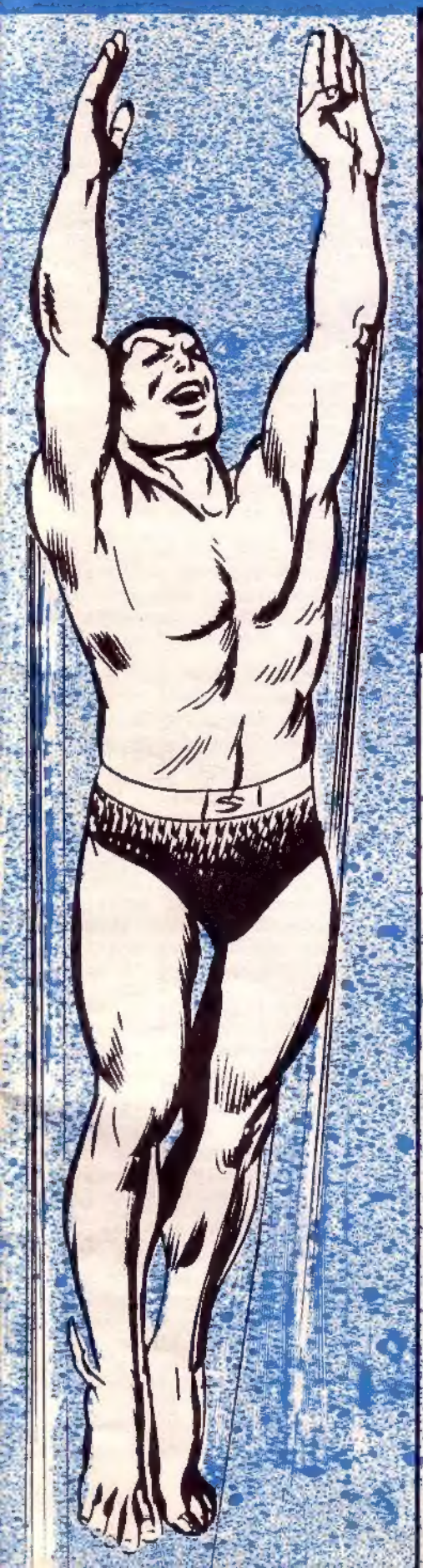
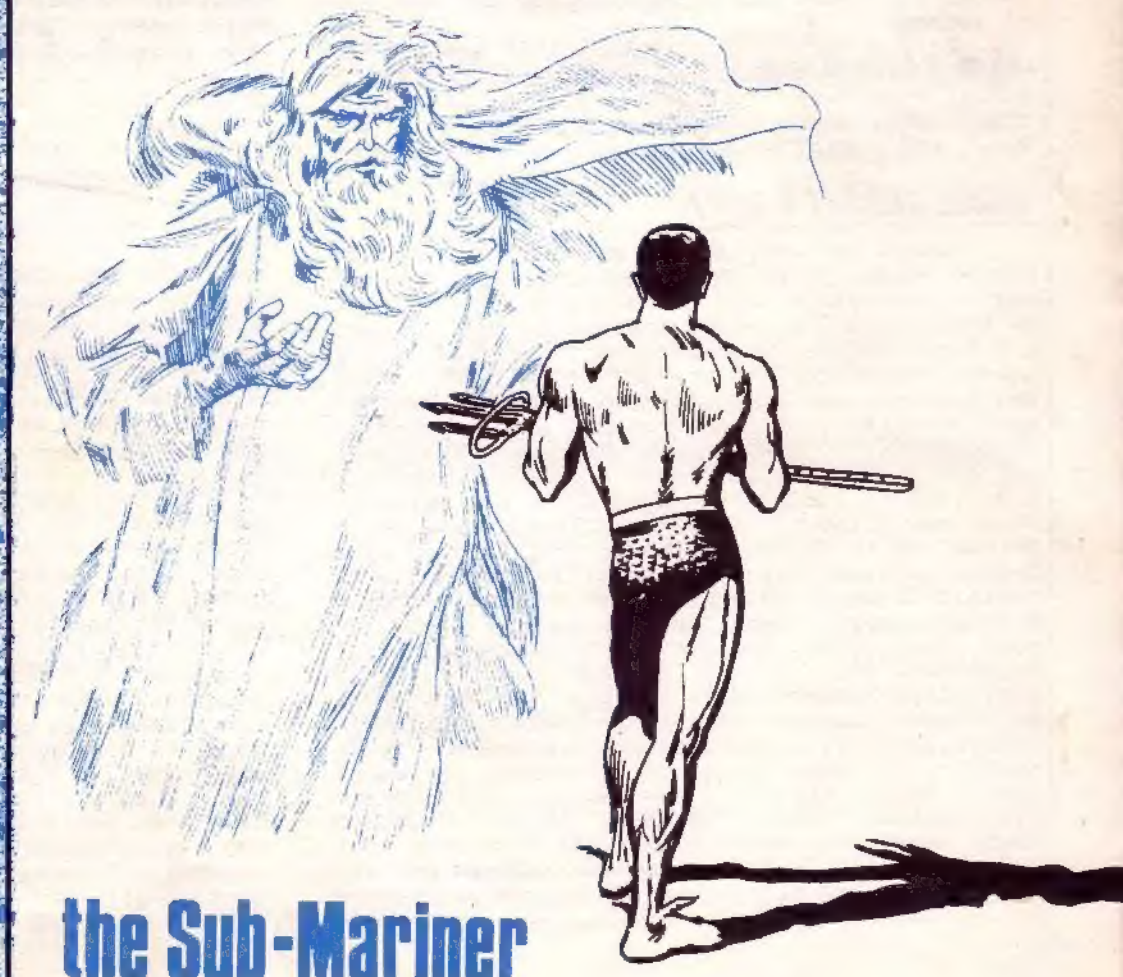
MARVELMANIA NO. 4





the Sub-Mariner

EDITORIAL

Mark Evanier, editor

GREETINGS DEPT.

You'll notice that a number of our regularly-presented features seem conspicuous in their absence this month. Chalk it up to the fact that I only have thirty-two pages available and better material seemed to present itself. Doom's Dispatch has been eliminated due to a lack of any questions which merited answering in print and I have suspended the Back Issue Trading Post since many readers have written to say they think we can do better things in the space allotted. For reasons we'll go into as this editorial progresses, an all-out effort has been made to make this the best issue yet. This is what you readers deserve and no less. Matter of fact, if I may be a little corny [And I'm allowed to be; I'm still the editor!] if this magazine is good, you readers deserve a lot of the credit. I look on this magazine as a creatively produced product for you. It could not be done if we weren't aware that there were people reading it out there who appreciate our efforts. End of sermon.

In the middle of producing this issue, our new typewriter arrived which bears slightly different type faces. After you're sick of reading this issue, test your alertness and try to tell which pages were done with the same typewriter.

NAME DROPPER DEPT.

Around the July fourth weekend, the former Associate Editor of this magazine, Steve Sherman and I journeyed to New York City to attend what is known as a Comic Book Convention and to meet all those people whose work we've admired in the comics for years. It was a most enjoyable trip and everyone was so hospitable that I'd thought, upon returning, of thanking them all in print in this editorial. But, then, I realized that that can get pretty dull, listing all those names--So I decided to limit my thank-yous to one sentence which now follows: Steve and I would like to be polite and to thank, for their hospitality, such people as Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, Johnny Romita, a certain madcap lady named Marie Severin, Morrie Kuramoto, Herb Trimpe, John Verpoorten, Joe Sinnott, Gene Colan, Don Heck, John Buscema, Berni Wrightson, Holli Resnicoff, Mimi Gold, Sol Brodsky, Allyn Brodsky, Marv Wolfman, Len Wein, Nancy Murphy, Carmine Infantino, Murray Boltinoff, Julius Schwartz, Joe Kubert, Sol Harrison, Jerry de Fuccio, Angelo Torres, John Putnam, Nicholas Cardy, Nelson Bridwell, Neal Adams, Howie Post, Jim Steranko, Robert Kanigher, Sergio Aragones, Henry Scarpelli, Denny O'Neil, Bill Parente, all the others I've left out and two fellows who are two of the very nicest and two of the sweetest--most cordial folks I've ever met--Mark Hanerfeld and Steve Ditko. It's too bad I had to limit my thanks to one sentence or else I'd also have had room to thank Dick Giordano for a breakfast invitation and Al Williamson for picking up checks all the way around. If I'd known a nationally-syndicated cartoonist were paying, I might have ordered more. It was especially enjoyable meeting fan/friends I've written to for years, such as Tony Isabella and Ken Viola. If the movie on the flight home hadn't have had Barbra Streisand in it, those two weeks might have been the most enjoyable of my life.

ARTISTIC INTEGRITY DEPT.

Most of the drawings submitted to this magazine have to be rejected because of space limits and the fact that if we printed every drawing we get, I wouldn't have room to write so much as an editorial like this one--The magazine would be a mass of drawings by aspiring artists, most with the potential to develop great skill if they are sincere and keep practicing. When asked for advice, I am quick to encourage practice and such little artistic "tricks" such as holding the art in front of a mirror. (Artists are invariably a bad judge of their own works--Holding it up to a mirror lets you get a new viewpoint and you can frequently see some glaring errors) One bit of advice I haven't yet offered and intend to offer now has to do with swiping.

Well over half of the drawings we get are an exact or inexact copy of a drawing from a recent Marvel comic. In some cases, the copy is a good one, showing skill in the handling of ink or in shading. This is a good way for potential artists to begin, but it has to come to an end eventually. There are fan-artists in their twenties who are still copying Kirby covers and have never developed styles or talents of their own. My warning here is that copying other artists is a great way to begin, but you have to grow up to grow out of it. Virtually every comic artist in the field learned by copying the work of some idol, but has managed to develop his own skills--has managed to learn while he copied so that he wouldn't have to copy any more. Jack Kirby began by copying Alex Raymond's Flash Gordon drawings, but you'd never know it to look at his art today, or even in the forties. He has his very own way of doing it which is, in many ways, better.

Granted, there are cases where even the most professional of artists will copy a panel or two from someone else. There is even an artist who composes his work almost exclusively of drawings copied from other artists. (You may have noticed the great similarities between the robot on last month's cover and a robot Jack Kirby drew a long time ago for D.C.'s Challengers of the Unknown.) But just as no great comedian would ever do another comedian's act, (Milton Berle, notwithstanding) the true greats in the field are the unique ones--The artists who have developed their very own unique styles and techniques. You can learn from them and you should, but don't depend upon copying to learn how to draw. [Also, don't rely on advice from neurotic writers like myself--Get real help!]

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DEPARTING DEPT.

This issue marks (no pun intended) my last as an editor for this magnificent magazine. Upon completion of this fourth issue, my resignation has been submitted from Marvelmania. If this magazine were as impersonal as *Time* or *Life*, such a departure would require little or no editorial--no explanation. But this magazine has been more than just a magazine for me. It has been a vehicle to communicate to you out there.

Leader-of-the-Bunch Don Wallace once took me out to lunch and told me that I deserved all of the credit for the conception of this magazine. Over a free lunch I hated to argue with him....but the credit has to go to you members out there!! All I did was suggest it and package a test issue with my friends' help to test the response--to find out how many Marvelmania members wanted a regular magazine. It was that response...That overwhelming response which led to this magazine being here today and my having had a good and an educational time assembling it.

But that's all over now. I've decided not to be the editor any longer because I can no longer do the kind of job I want to. It involves a lot of personal reasons which try as I may, I can't explain so that any of you would appreciate them. Let's just say that I can't continue to put this magazine together because of the circumstances I have had to put it together under. I trust that my replacement--whoever he will be--will do better coping with the problems.

There are so many people to thank and so little space that I'd like to just thank almost everyone whose name appears on the opposite page--Especially Stan, Roy, Tony Isabella, and a lot of good friends who were always quick to offer advice and help: Alan Hanley, Bruce Simon, Robert Solomon, Ethel Hurwicz, Gordon Arnold, Jon Yost, Charles Meyerson, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Linda Walters, Mike Rotblatt, Herbert Robaire, Johnny Romita, Marie Severin, Holli and Mimi, Jim Steranko--everybody who was so much assistance! And I'd like to apologize to Stan Lee for resigning, before that nice piece on me in the Bullpen Bulletins hit the stands. Stan, I'd rather cut off my arm than belie the Bullpen page--but I didn't really have that much of a choice. Thanks, Stan for all the help and thanks also to Roy for adding to an already busy schedule to help.

Steve Sherman, who *was* the Associate Editor, resigned a few weeks back for much the same reason as I depart. Steve and I will be working now on a batch of new comics coming from D.C. (Benedict Evanier!) edited by a fellow who pencilled over a hundred issues of *Fantastic Four*. Anyone care to guess who it is?

In addition to assisting Jack Kirby (Oh, darn! I gave away who it is!) I'll be co-publishing with Robert Solomon, a newsletter/fanzine which will be filled with a few pages of fannish gab and my world-famed philosophies. It's called *Fan Focus* but I won't be so mercenary as to tell you where you can order a copy. Yes I will--It goes for a buck for five issues (25¢ each) from Robert Solomon/9702 Beverlywood St./Los Angeles, Ca. 90034 and I hope all the pen-pals I've made while here will write to me in care of Robert (since I'm no longer getting mail addressed to Marvelmania) to keep the friendship going and to let me know how you liked this, my last issue. I tried my best on it--I know that.

I won't go on, lest I get so sentimental that I depress you all. Eschew obfuscation! --me

MARVELMANIA

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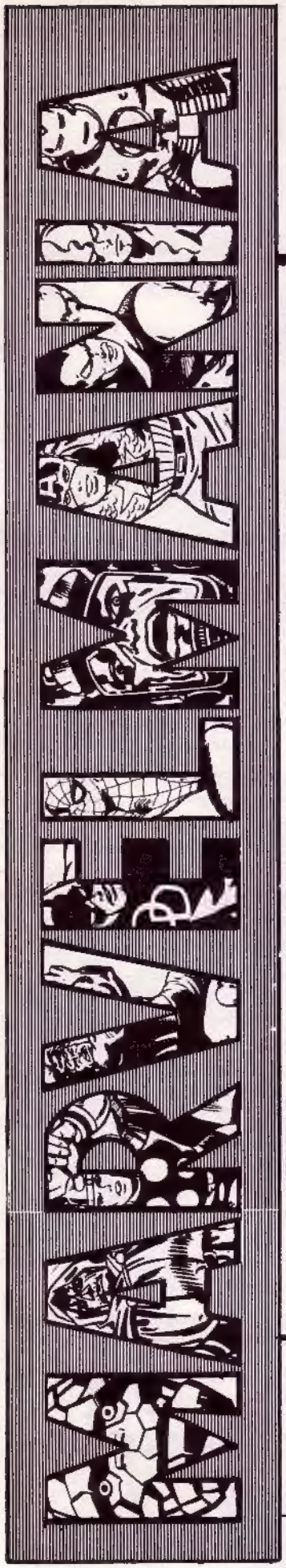

Dear Bruce

MARVELMANIA MONTHLY MAGAZINE NO. 4

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LETTER DEPT.

Dear Mark,

Don't you think it would be a good idea for you to tell all your members how they can obtain a copy of my hilarious magazine, *Comic Book*?

--Alan Hanley
1940 W. Wilson Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60640

[Alan James Hanley--I'm ashamed of you! If you think I'm going to give you a free plug for your hilarious collection of humorous cartoons, you'd better think again! I wouldn't stoop so low as to suggest that all our readers send you a buck for the latest issue, even if it is the funniest thing I've ever read! So there!]

Dear Mark,

I have an interesting item for you--Take a look at the back of Pacific Gas and Electric's new album, "Are You Ready?", and tell me what it reminds you of!

--David L. Simons
Kobelt Drive
Wallkill, N.Y. 12589

[It reminds me of a drawing which Jack Kirby did a few years back of Captain America. Seems like the album bacover artist decided to borrow Kirby's pose--At least he has taste!]

Dear Mark,

I'm with Charles Meyerson on his stand about word balloons on covers. They are childish and almost always misleading--and most of the time, say something stupid and downright degrading. I just pray Marvelmania doesn't fall into it.

--Dan Bischoff
1451 Brookmark S.E.
Kentwood, Mich. 49508

[We've received literally dozens of letters protesting word balloons on covers--as if we could do anything about it! All we can say is that it is added for a simple sales reason--Words which explain the situation may entice the customers--Marvelmania won't fall prey to it, but, then, we don't sell on newsstands so it doesn't matter if we have words on the cover or not!]

Dear Mark,

I have an unidentified pre-super hero Marvel comic. The cover is missing and I do not know a thing about the title, number, or date.

One of the stories in it, "The Things From Dimension X" is by Don Heck. Can you help me to identify this comic?

--Frank Lynch
1032 Country Club Dr.
N. Palm Beach, Fla. 33403

[Sounds to me like you've got a copy of Strange Tales *#80 from January of 1961!]*

MARVELMANIA MAGAZINE
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THE HULK IN THE GRIP OF SYKLOP

BY HARLAN ELLISON

A forthcoming two-part Hulk story, now in the works is based upon a synopsis written by one Harlan Ellison, noted science-fiction writer (see page 18) and, incidentally, Marvel follower. He was contacted some months back by our own Roy Thomas on the possibilities of Ellison doing something for Marvel. After much discussion, it was decided that he'd do a synopsis for the Hulk which Roy would have worked into a finished comic book. As we go to press, final arrangements are just being made for the adaptation--But Ellison, also a reader of Marvelmania Magazine, thought that it would be interesting to publish his synopsis so that it may be compared with the finished product which should hit the stands early next year. Roy said he'll try to keep as much of Ellison's description in the final product as is possible and also to try to keep Ellison's plot outline intact. This, then, is Ellison's story-line...

SPLASH PANEL shows the Hulk caught between the poles of a specially-rigged trap powered by the magneto generators of Boulder Dam. He is being bombarded by millions of volts of electricity. Thunderbolt Ross and his corps of army engineers have lured the green behemoth to the dam where they have pinned him in a barrage of current--[much in the manner The Thing was killed], in hopes the assault--enough to slaughter an army of rampaging Visigoths--will stun him long enough to put him in a newly-designed crypt filled with coma-gas. Then, effectively immobilized, the Hulk will be transported to a testing ground where he will be kept unconscious until a cure has been effected to turn him back, once and for all, to Bruce Banner. The crypt was designed by Tony Stark and Reed Richards, working in conjunction with Professor Xavier.

It's working! Screaming in impotent rage, the Hulk struggles feebly in the grip of raw energy cascading over him. And as Mr. Fantastic and Tony Stark look on with Professor X, gauging the possibilities of finally saving Bruce Banner from the living coffin of flesh wherein he has been trapped for so many years, we *cut away to:*

The Avengers, hot on the trail of a menace so

great they cannot even speak his name without fearing dread. They are stalking through swampland...shrouded in mist, eerie, compelling...on a nameless atoll near Easter Island. Looking for a decayed and ancient idol, an icon of a lost civilization: key to a subterranean stronghold of the decimator whose very existence on the planet is more deadly than a thousand hydrogen bombs. They push onward and, finally, in the heart of the steaming night swamp they stumble on it--a statue so grotesque and monstrous it brings them to a halt. And we *cut back to:*

The Hulk, pinned in a torrent of lightning. As the electricity takes its toll and the Hulk sinks down senseless, the great crane-machines move in, to lift him into the coma crypt. But as they lumber forward, as they wait for the instant the electricity ceases its crackling work, the Hulk suddenly becomes transparent, wavers in their sight, and...vanishes! Winks out of ex-

Cut to the underground eyrie of a bizarre new villain, *Syklop;* half-human, half-creature of a long-dead race, *he* is the menace being even now stalked by the Avengers. And as we first see him, first dwell on the eldritch horror of his single bee-faceted ruby eye, his strangely-structured body, we see the Hulk suddenly appear in the crystal receiving portal of a weird machine.

Syklop runs through his background and his purpose at this meaningful moment like a damned soul telling its beads for the final, agonizing time: his race had lived in the bowels of the Earth eons before even apes had walked the land. But they had fallen into disrepute with the dark gods they had worshipped, and they had been put to eternal sleep. For millenia they had dwelled in that starless night of empty dreams; until Syklop had been called up from slumber by the dark gods, who had promised him if he could tap a new source of power for their failing energy-demands, they would release his race--who would then with ease recapture the world for themselves. And so, with the aid of ancient sciences and regimens even the most advanced human scientists would call sorcery, Syklop has located a source of power. limitless power, that if he can only tap, he can save his race from eternal sleep and certain destruction. That power-source: The Hulk.

Now, with the Hulk stunned, lying semi-conscious in the portal of the great machine he has used to disassemble the green giant's atoms and reassemble them here...Syklop knows his theory was correct: the only way to uncover the secret of the Hulk's incredible power is to compress the atoms of that green form so the molecular structure can be better studied under the analyzers of another of Syklop's herculean machines.

But to do this, the Hulk must be reduced in size and must be shrunk and compressed. He transfers the Hulk to the other machine, and the shrinking ray begins to bathe the green behemoth in a ruby glow. Syklop knows he must be careful, and not shrink the creature too much.

But even as he works his ancient science on The Hulk, The Avengers crash into the subterranean laboratory. A fight ensues, in which Syklop must struggle for his life against the massed power of the Avengers assembled. While so doing he is unable to watch the progress of the skrinkage of the Hulk, and in mere moments the Hulk has been reduced and compressed so much, he becomes invisible, shrinks down and down and down until he is hurled into a sub-atomic, sub-molecular universe that exists in a mote of dust. Down, down, down until he emerges, gigantic in another world. And is shrunk down more and more until he stands astraddle two continents, a Colossus of Rhodes from another universe. The shrinking continues rapidly and the Hulk soon becomes smaller than the average size of a creature in *this* sub-molecular universe, but...

Cut back to Syklop's subterranean laboratory, where the horror-reprsentative of that sleeping race of monsters manages to reach the machine used to assemble and disassemble atoms. He turns the ray on the Avengers and they blink out of existence...appearing suddenly...with their memories wiped clean of anything even remotely connected to Syklop...on the downtown express platform of the IRT 7th Avenue Subway...turning and looking and confused at how they got there as...

Syklop dashes to close off the shrinking ray.

Realizing he has sent his one hope of success to another universe, Syklop begins making preparations to follow the Hulk to that infintesimal space. But to do that he has to revamp the ray so it will shrink him to a size larger than the size the Hulk must have now become, and bring them both back at a pre-set time. It will take time to make such changes, and while Syklop bends to his intricate chore...

Return to the Hulk in that sub-atomic universe.

Now he is dwarfed by the feather-topped trees, he is smaller than the diamond rocks striated with onyx, he is tinier than the lumbering, lupine beast snuffling at him through the underbrush. But he is *still* the Hulk. And as the saber-fanged wild wolf-thing spies him and leaps at him, the Hulk grabs at one of the protruding razor-sharp teeth, rips it loose from the creature's mouth, and impales the wolf-thing through the throat on its own tooth.

He hears the shreiks of people in terror and gives one mighty leap that carries him above the waving feather-fronds of the trees. Casting about in mid-leap, he sees a city of pink and blue stone, and from that city comes the massed sound of a populace under siege. He hurls himself through the air and lands with a crash just outside the gates of the magical little city, where he sees a rabid pack of saber-toothed wolves like the one he has just slain, attacking the walls.

And he sees that the people, who are *small and green and quite beautiful* are ill-equpped to stave them off. He identifies with them: they are his size, they are his color, and he has no love for the wolves.

He wades into the beasts, using his behemoth power to scatter them and frighten them. He grabs two of them by their tails and ties the tails together; then, using the wolves as a Gaucho would use a bola, he spins them overhead, around and around, finally hurling them far off across the horizon. One after another he crushes the wolves, hitting one so hard he drives him deep into the ground.

Finally, when they are dispersed, the gates of the city open and the people stream out. They seem, at first, to be attacking (to the dim brain of the Hulk), but they are so lovely, so friendly, he holds his blows for a moment and they lift him to their shoulders, carry him into the city, and there they make the Hulk their king!

The queen, *Jarella*, is obviously taken with the Hulk and she orders the Pantheon of Sorcerers to devise a way by which the Hulk can learn their language. *Torla*, the head sorcerer, a kind of Merlin-like man, works a spell (that in this universe is science, not magic) that not only gives the Hulk the gift of speech as they speak it, but somehow clears the be-fogged brain of the behemoth, and for the first time in many months he can think rationally, not as the rampaging killer he has been.

For the first time in his existence, the Hulk is happy. He seems at home! These green people love him, want him, need him as their King. And for the first time a beautiful woman loves *him*, not Bruce Banner but *him*, the Hulk. Only *Visis*, the pretender to the throne, hates him, and plots to have him killed.

One night the men of Visis descend on the Hulk as he sits staring out at the multi-colored star sky of this nameless little world in a dust mote. He is attacked but easily manages to drive them off, in the process grabbing one of the assassins who tells him it is Visis behind the plot.

The Hulk calls the court in session and confronts Visis with the charges, and the assassin turns evidence against his master. Everyone expects the Hulk to kill Visis right there in the throne room. But this is a new Hulk, one whose mind has been cleared by Torla's magic/science. And he merely orders Visis to gather his goods and his supporters and leave. He is banished.

The Queen and the court cheer the Hulk for his humanity, and they declare they want him to stay with them forever. The Hulk's heart is full, for the first time he knows love and joy and...

An enormous shadow falls across the glass dome of thr throne room. Then a monstrous hand crashes through the glass and huge fingers grab the Hulk in an unbreakable grip. He is lifted up, out of the castle, into the sky. In the grip of Syklop!

As Jarella and Torla and his subjects watch in horror, King Hulk is lifted away and up and up and up. Then, in the clutch of that ghastly eldritch creature who stands like a mountain above their land, they see Syklop laugh his terrifying laugh of triumph and...they both grow so enormous they vanish from the sub-molecular universe.

Jarella is bereft of her love, and the people have lost their king. But what of the Hulk?

He reappears in Syklop's laboratory, but before the monster can sedate the Hulk, the effects of Torla's sorcery wear off, and the Hulk goes on a rampage, demolishing the lab. Then, before Syklop can stop him, he batters his way through the very walls of the underground lab, through the earth, and leaps into the sky.

Syklop's equipment in ruined. He must start over again, if he can. But even before he can contemplate such an alternative, one of the Dark Gods appears to him, even more terrifying in its shadowy outlines than Syklop himself. And the Dark God intones, "You have failed"!

Syklop screams as the Dark God takes his revenge

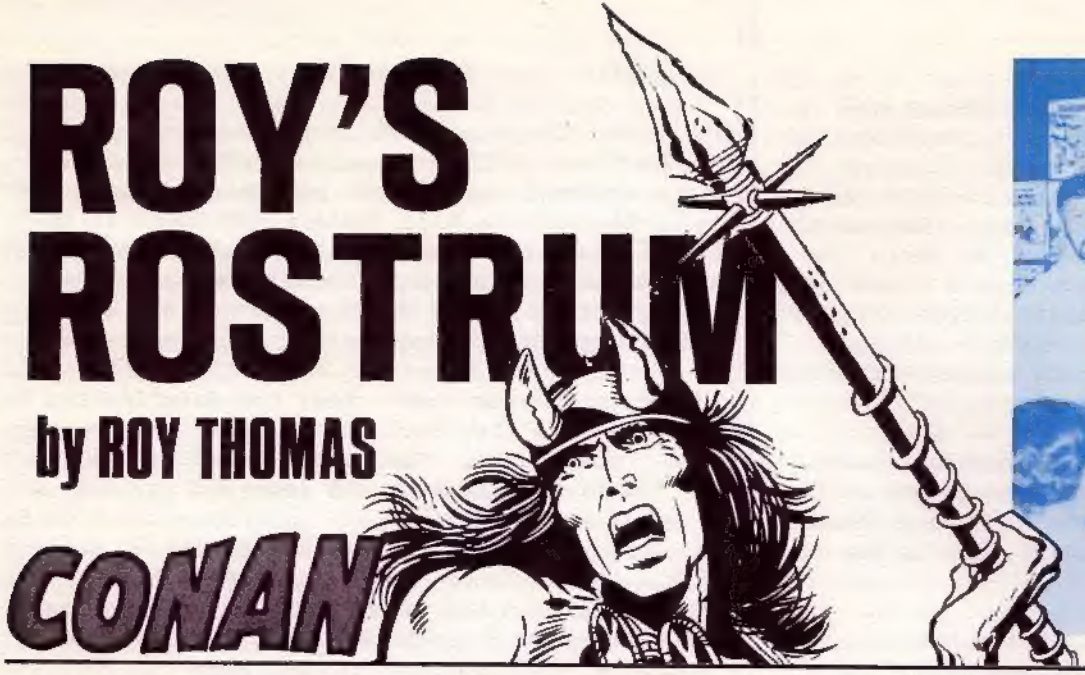
And what of the Hulk?

Leaping through the sky, a dim memory of happiness still fading from his fogged brain, he remembers a tiny green Queen and a time of joy. And he soars away into the distance, trying to find a place he can never find again, not even understanding that the world and the life he seeks are forever denied him, locked in a mote of dust clinging to his garments.

Once again he is the homeless, brutal Hulk.□

ROY'S ROSTRUM

by ROY THOMAS



Last month, we discussed how it came to pass that Marvel decided to produce a comic of Conan the Barbarian and by the time you read the first issue and see how the comic finally materialized on the stands.

Not quite the way I'd like it, though--There are always things which don't work out the way I want. Due to budgetary limitations, my original choice for penciller--John Buscema, who loves to do sword-and-sorcery art even though he does not read the stories--was out of the question. Jim Steranko was dormant and mumbling about his own Talon character, who will doubtlessly be appearing someday somehow somewhere; Jack Kirby, best super-hero artist of all time, wasn't available.

And then there was Barry Smith, my personal second choice. A talented young Britisher, recently returned to the Isles, and all of twenty summers old. Always on the verge of proving he was the truly good comic book artist that we all felt he would one day be. Willing to read and work over the material, and eager to try his all at a strip which hadn't already been established by someone else. Barry Smith it was...and I am glad!

Now I set about in earnest to read all Conan material. And I found this time a distinct pleasure in some of the better stories (mostly the ones by Robert E. Howard himself; L. Sprague de Camp was a smoother writer, but his stories just didn't seem like Conan to me. Lin Carter seemed much like de Camp, though less sure-handed as a writer. And Nyborg's Return of Conan read too much like a bad Burroughs pastiche--the one real loser in the ten published volumes, for my money!) Barry read several of the books, too---and then, working from my rather sketchy synopsis he began to draw.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: When Howard, the creator of CONAN died at age thirty, several Conan stories had been printed in the Weird Tales pulp. More recently, the demand for Conan adventures in the paperback books caused several writers, Carter, de Camp, and Nyborg, to be engaged to complete a number of unfinished Howard stories, adapt other Howard tales into Conan tales, or to completely originate new Conan stories to fill the demand.]

The first result was not, frankly, a happy one as far as either Stan or Barry or I was concerned. From the very splash page, things failed to go quite as we'd wanted them to. Barry had as we expected, plunged right into the story for a scene of Conan whirling about [Reprinted here last issue], albeit in rather restrained fashion on the first page. Barry promptly had him leap off a cliff into a pile of Vanir. Now, I'm just as big on in medias res as the next writer---but I felt that this would make it difficult to acclimate the reader to the fact that he was in a world of 12,000 years ago which was physically & mystically different from today's, or even yesterday's, world; besides, there just wasn't that good action we needed in the first few pages of the book. After that it began to pick up and by the second half of the book, Barry was "feeling" Conan and drawing Conan.

So--I sliced a brief skirmish out of those last few pages where it actually retarded climax building, and asked Barry to redraw the splash--and insert a new second page, showing the Vanir and Aesir battling it out and establishing Conan before he leaped off that cliff shouting a famous "By Crom!" The end result was a much happier book, although still one with which we were not totally satisfied. Dan Adkins, long one of my favorite inkers, did a creditable job on the issue--but somehow he didn't seem precisely the inker for Conan, on second glance. (There were other considerations for taking Dan off Conan as well, none of them a discredit to Dan's considerable talent, but they are extranneous here and I won't go into them.)

Thus, it was with some trepidation that I roughly plotted the second issue. The end product, this time, however--though quite different from what I had envisioned when I wrote the synopsis--was one of the best art jobs Barry turned in to date, with some crystal-clear story telling, improved art and layouts, and a firm grasp on just what the material was all about. (This is all the more odd because this second issue is as much Burroughs-oriented as Howardesque, even though Barry professes never to have read any of Edgar Rice Burroughs' work--and I've read precious little of him since I was 14 or so.) At any rate, it was with the second issue, particularly that I became truly proud to be associated with the comic--and I think Barry feels the same way, too.

We immediately began work on future issues, all to be published chronologically and in agreement with the informal history of Conan's career as mapped out years ago by fans. Thus this

ILLUSTRATIONS ON THIS AND THE FOLLOWING PAGE ARE UNUSED PAGES FROM CONAN #1, PENCILLED BY BARRY SMITH.

first issue illustrates the "Fruitless raiding against the Vanir" mentioned in the Lancer volume Conan, while the second issue takes place as not too far afterward; the beast-men of #2 take their existence from passages in Howard's "Hyborian Age" essay (pp. 25 and 27 of Conan, if you want to look it up). Number three carries Conan to the border between Hyperborea and Brythunia--in order to establish the long-standing hatreds, Conan feels for the Hyperboreans--mentioned in a number of volumes. And with #4, we have--"Tower of the Elephant," an adaptation of the earliest, (chronological) Conan tale written by Howard.

A word about the series. We'll be adapting many of the actual Robert E. Howard Conan stories--though not those written by de Camp, Carter and Nyborg. Legal reasons, you understand. Here and there, where de Camp edited Howard, we'll be working from the original Howard manuscripts (or Xerox copies thereof) so that a few facts and a few names will be different. Confusing, though, only to the expert--and the purist--whose weight in the balance in next to nil, anyway.

And, as much as de Camp did with certain of the stories, we'll be adapting various non-Conan tales into Conan stories, something often rather easy to do. Issue #3, for instance, is an adaptation of the posthumously-published Howard tale "The Grey God Passes" which has a slave-hero by the name of Conn (close, no?) and which contains several elements of considerable literary merit. Good comic book material, too!

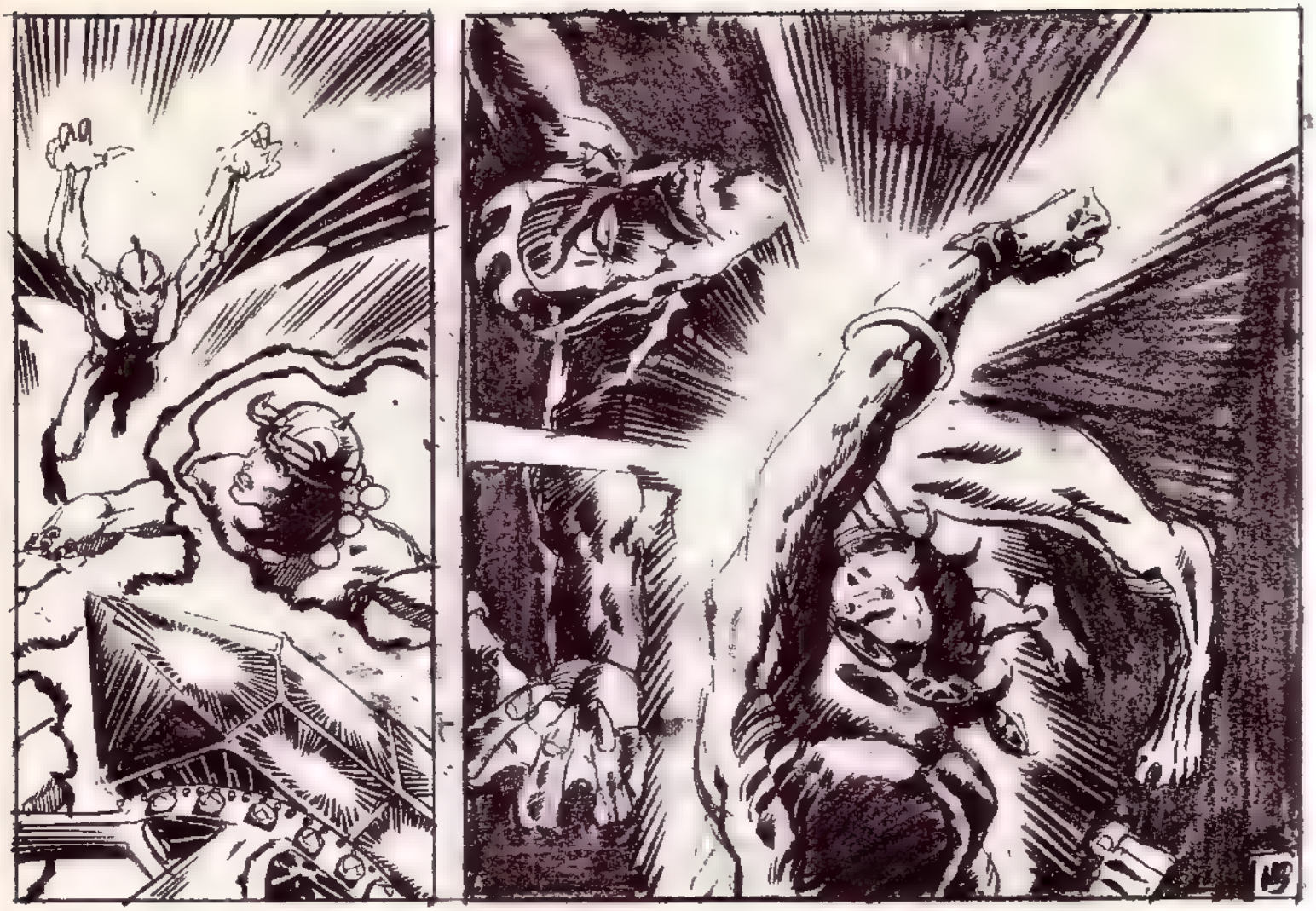
--And if you don't like the series by when you get to #4, "The Tower of the Elephant," I'd suggest you swear off it forever because it will never take. In it, I believe that Barry and I acheived the balance between literary and artistic and commercial considerations which we have been striving long months to achieve. Whether I shall find that anyone likes that issue or not--I shall doubtless consider it one of the best of the Marvel or non-Marvel comics of 1971.....with scarcely a blush crossing my dimpled cheeks. I think I know good comic books--And this is a real good one.

[Sal Buscema, by the way, takes over on the inking with issue #2, and while he's not necessarily a better inker than Adkins, per se--That's not important anyway..,he lends to Barry Smith's pencils an illustrative approach which is almost perfect. Only a fan who has a shrine to Frazetta resting in his alcove could fail to find some merit in the Smith/S. Buscema collaboration.]

But, enough bugle-blowing. After all, as I write these lines, I know than the fans will be with their own opinions, and that it is theirs--not mine--that will eventually make or break the book. Some of those opinions, in fact, began to arrive at our offices even before the book came out.

This hardly surprised me. Long before the news of the coming of Conan to Marvel comics had broken in fanzines, I predicted precisely tones and types of mail we would receive in advance of the book's publication--which will probably be a great deal like the mail that will arrive in July and August when the magazine is on the newsstands.

Many notes, of course, were pure congratulatory epistles--amazed but glad that Marvel was responding to fan pressure (and it is, to a certain extent, no doubt about it). Many expressed the viewpoint that only Frank Frazetta (or possibly one of his disciples such as youngblooded-



Berni Wrightson, who is now doing a King Kull adaptation for us) could possibly illustrate it. I won't dignify that viewpoint with much reply, even though I admire Frazetta's artwork, because Conan got along just fine for some years before Frazetta came on the scene--and these over-eager souls forget that, at least before this comic-book, sword-and-sorcery has been primarily a medium for writers, not artists.

Other notes, of course, castigated us even for trying to do a Conan comic under the Comics Code. The limitations on blood and sex in Code-approved comics, they felt, would stop us from a decent interpretation. I don't agree, obviously but this point is, at least, a defensible one.

A few readers, not fans of Barry's work in the past, learned that Smith was to do the drawing and denounced it, sight unseen. I expected, that I would be denounced for daring to tread in the footsteps of Howard and de Camp, as well,but that's one prediction that hasn't materialized--yet.

One particularly distasteful individual upon hearing but the vaguest rumor of Marvel publishing Conan as a comic book--wrote me a personal diatribe which vilified the whole idea. He saw himself as a self-appointed committee-of-one to protect the valiant Cimmerian from the ravage by Marvel, DC, or any other card-carrying Comics Code member. He was, he intimated, in possession of L. Sprague de Camp's actual home address, and he was going to write him a personal letter, urging him to take action against us. (In point of fact, de Camp seems not to have felt strongly one way or the other about the proposed comic as it concerned neither his written material nor a paperback he had done.)

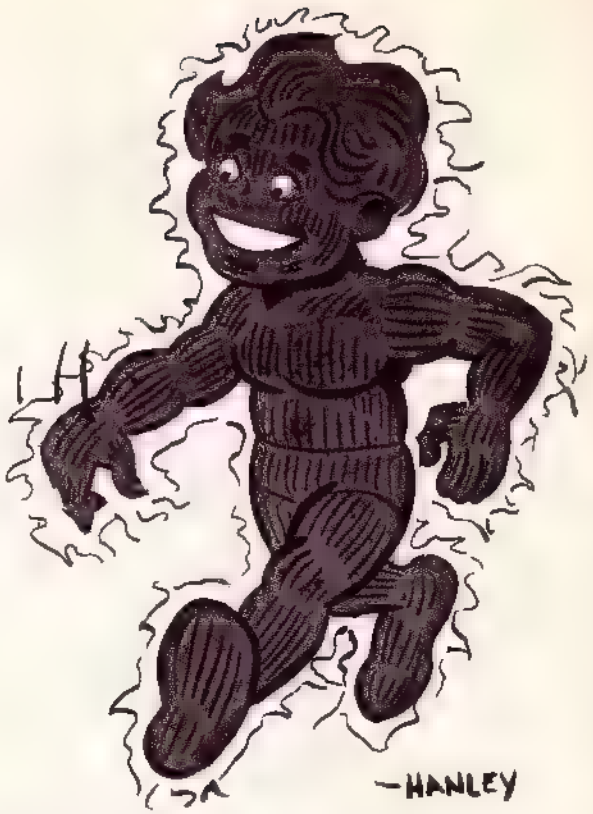
There is little one can do with fanatics... outside of shooting them or ignoring them. I was something closer to the second extreme, though I couldn't resist pointing out to the skeptic that even the critics in the New York Times wait until after they've seen a play to review it. I'd suggested then that he give us one issue, preferably a few, since a comic book is a growing--a progressing organism...And then write a more coherent criticism which would be given such consideration as it deserves. He hasn't troubled a certain Associate Editor at Marvel since.

Luckily, those persons who have viewed one or more Conan tales in advance of publication---they have, despite reservations, been much more enthusiastic. Writer Ted White, never a strong Barry Smith fan, felt our British bombshell had finally come of age by the second issue. Glenn Lord, executor of the Robert E. Howard estate, commented that he preferred Smith's rendition to the more "brutish" Frazetta version. (as do I.)

One thing, though, seems for certain. For as long as Conan the Barbarian is published, in comic book form by Marvel, there are certain to be admirers and detractors--writing page after page of learned and passionate discourse on each issue.

I hope they go on writing for a long...long time.

MARVELMANIA CLUB NEWS



You may recall that when the first Marvelmania membership kits were sent out, questionnaires in them asked you members for your opinions on vital issues of the day--among them who were favorite pencillers and inkers out there. It took us quite some time to tally the results and once we did, it was some time before space could be made to announce those results. But here they are--!

FAVORITE PENCILLER was a runaway for Jack Kirby, who racked up more than 40% of the total and was followed by Jim Steranko, John Buscema, Gene Colan and Johnny Romita in that order. It is interesting to note that Stan Lee and Roy Thomas--a pair of writers if ever there were one--received a number of votes in this category, which apparently means that a lot of Marvel readers can not understand credits too well.

FAVORITE INKER was a walk-away category. No one but Joe Sinnott could have picked up over 60% of the ballots, with high scores also going to Tom Palmer, Dan Adkins, and Frank Giacoia.

FAVORITE CHARACTER went to Spider-Man who managed to beat out Captain America by less than ten votes. Next was Silver Surfer, followed by Thor and the Thing.

FAVORITE MAGAZINE was Spider-Man, followed by an evenly-split heat between Fantastic Four, Silver Surfer, and the Avengers.

FAVORITE LETTERER was Sam Rosen.

FAVORITE VILLAIN was Dr. Doom, followed by such baddies as the Red Skull, the Mandarin, Dr. Octopus, and the Leader.

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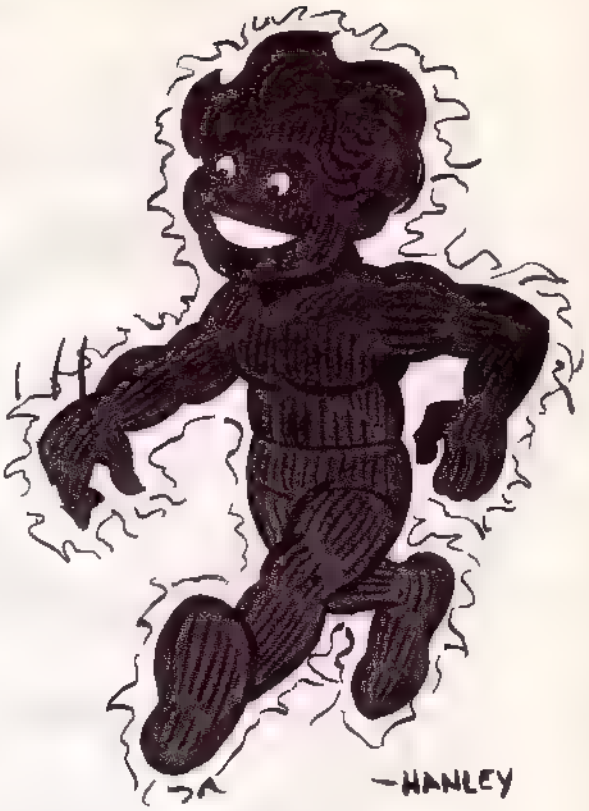
★★★

MARVELMANIA CLUB NEWS



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★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

GOSSIP: What well-known D.C. editor was sighted wearing a "Make Mine Marvel" button at the Comic Art Convention in New York? Hint: It was handed to him by 9-year old Mark Sinnott who helped out in the passing around of buttons and who's shaping up into as good an artist as his father!

EDITORIAL

As of this issue, you will begin to notice a slight diversification of the material in this magazine. The "Origin of Odin", in this issue is an indication of this change in material. When catering to an audience of thousands of fans, you're going to find a great many different interests, Buckaroo, and our job is to do our best to delve into those interests! In fact we at the head office hardily encourage you members to send in articles about your <u>own</u> favorite areas of imagination, because after all, isn't that what it's all about?

If you don't have the time to do an article, at least drop us a line and clue us in on <u>your</u> favorite of the many fields of imagination.... be it comics, science fiction, or you name it! After all--we're all members of the same club, friend!

Sincerely,
Bruce Schweiger
and Jon Yost

By definition--a Comic Book Convention is a gathering of fans for purposes of trading comics, making new friends, hearing wise speakers expound upon what comics are all about...and, in the final analysis, it is just what the fans want it to be.

Comic Conventions are scarce on the Western seaboard--too scarce. This year, however, someone did something to change that and a convention was held in San Diego, hosted by a number of comic fans in that area, among them Shel Dorf--a comic strip devotee, Marvelmania member, and top aficianado.

Saturday's events opened the convention and the Hucksters' (Dealers') Room was opened up for trading, swapping, and stuff like that. The recently refurbished U.S. Grant Hotel had been decorated with posters, comic strip originals, and displays by Shel and his crew.

Ray Bradbury, noted sci-fi writer and rapid transit crusader, spoke extemporaneously on many topics of interest to comic fans, all of whom we noted were delighted with his talk.

Mark Hanerfeld, representative from National Periodicals, spoke briefly on D.C.'s plans in coming months and then introduced their newest, most innovative, editor--Jack Kirby.

Jack spoke briefly about his work and drew a few pictures for the crowd of the Thing and of Dr. Doom--with and without his mask. He gave a quick demonstration of how he draws machinery in comics. [Personal aside to Johnny Romita: He begins with simple shapes--such as letters of the alphabet--and builds out from there!] However, most of Jack's time at the podium was taken up--as you might imagine--fielding questions from an eager audience.

There were films and auctions and panels on a number of topics and all sorts of exciting events taking place over the three days.

This month's Heroism award goes out to Nelson Bridwell, D.C. editor and writer and contributor to Mad Magazine. Recently, Nelson was attacked on the streets of New York by a "mugger". Now, you have to understand that Bridwell is one of the nicest, most good-natured men you'd ever want to meet. And as such, he probably looked a good target for this mugger who, it was learned later, is one of the F.B.I.'s most-wanted operators in this field. Any lesser man would have surrendered his watch, wallet, etc...But not our hero. Bridwell put up such a fight that it will be several weeks before that mugger is able to--if he isn't too afraid--go back to work. Nelson showed up at work bruised and battered, but police reported that the mugger got the worst of it being more or less disabled by Bridwell before--unfortunately--he got away. --All of which does make for an interesting idea. Do you suppose by some chance, that writing all those Superman tales might have had some effect on Nelson?

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN vs. The Phantom Burglar!

part 2

Sometime back, Stan Lee and Johnny Romita collaborated on two weeks of a proposed Spider-Man newspaper strip which, unfortunately, never made it as far as the newspapers. Last month, we printed the first week and on the three pages that follow are the other week's strips that were drawn. Since only two weeks were done, the story has no end, and Spider-Man and you readers are left up in the air, hanging...

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE: With the city being robbed by a Phantom Burglar, J. Jonah Jameson is quick to accuse Spider-Man, who merely laughs off the accusation, figuring no one would pay attention to J. Jonah's silly ravings and editorials...

Spider-Man sees a chance to relax for a while and lead a normal life as Peter Parker. He chooses to let the police handle the Phantom Burglar...

Meanwhile--The Burglar is hard at work, operating as he has in the past, from the tops of tall buildings...

An unsuspecting watchman is suddenly grabbed from behind by two gloved hands with an obviously sinister intent. Our story begins as the Phantom Burglar renders the watchman unconscious to proceed with his scheme, unaware that he will soon be facing our hero... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE...

IT HAS ARRIVED!

Yes, the new Marvelmania club emblem has been chosen! Out of the many applications, the judges have chosen this as the official Marvelmania emblem.

It will appear upon club notices and the like as the symbol of the finest superhero fan club in the world! Do you members have any ideas regarding future uses of the club emblem, such as possibly a club patch or decal? We at Marvelmania H.Q. are very excited that we now have a "banner" under which to stand, and we want more and better ideas as to how to use it!

The designer of this emblem, which shall henceforth identify Marvelmania to the public is William (Bill) Cantey. Thanks, Bill, for contributing this winning effort!

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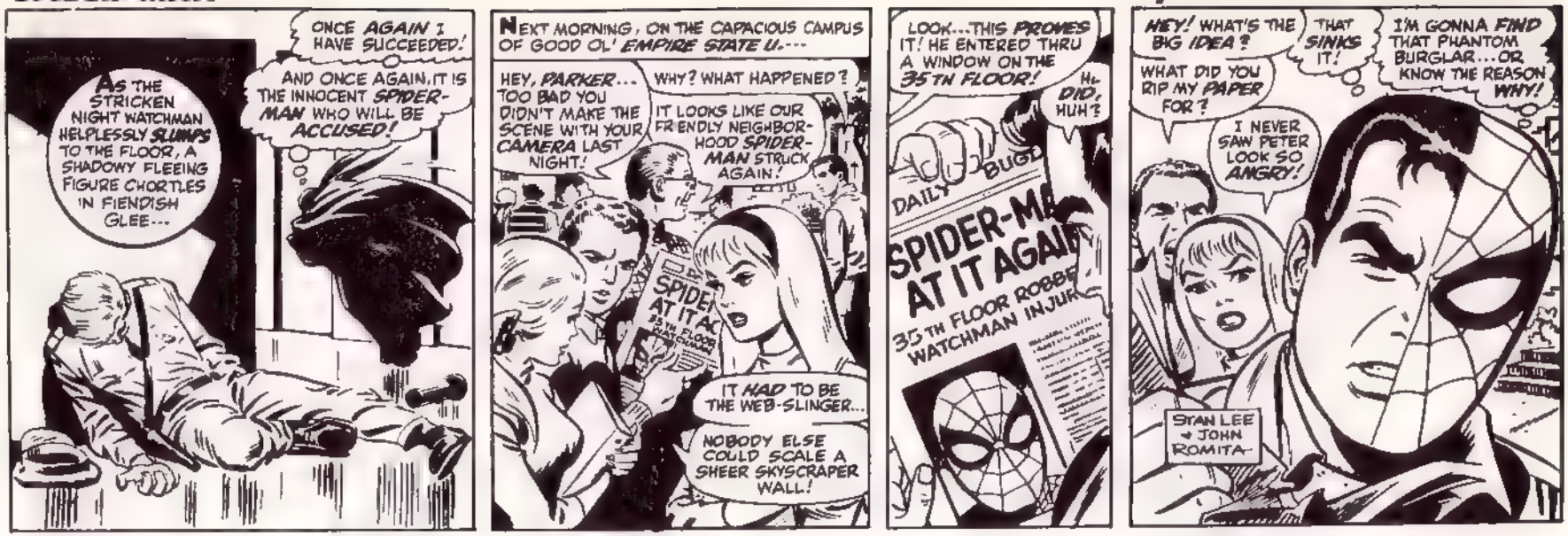
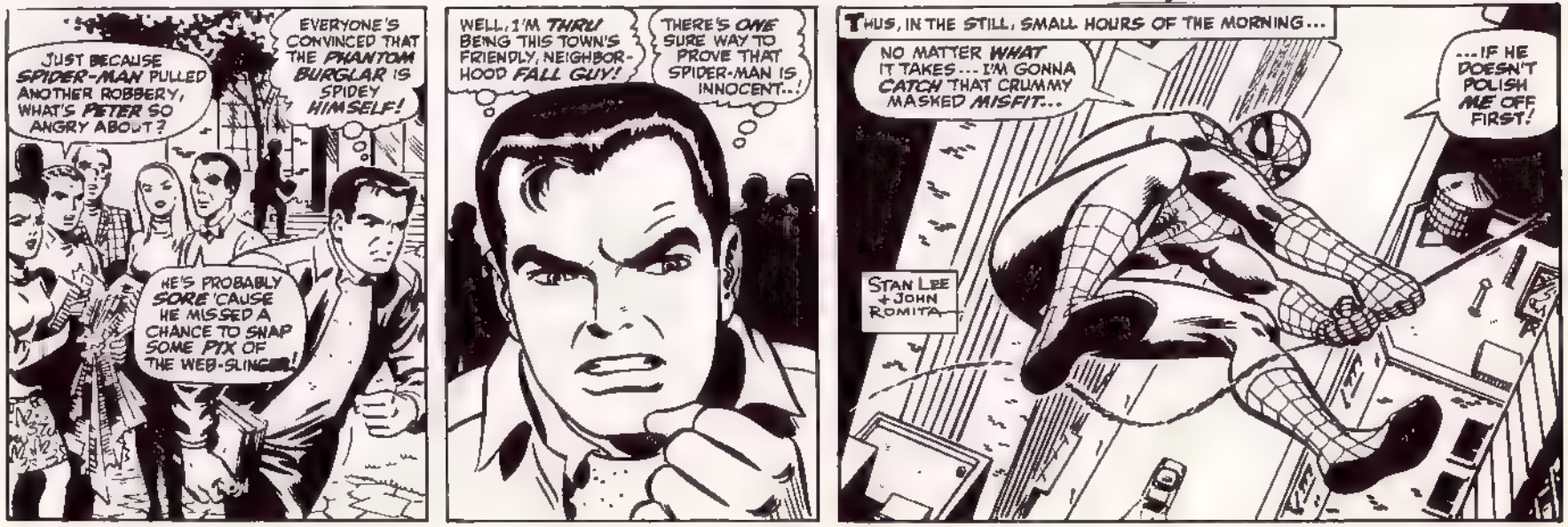
SPIDER-MAN

by Stan Lee & John Romita

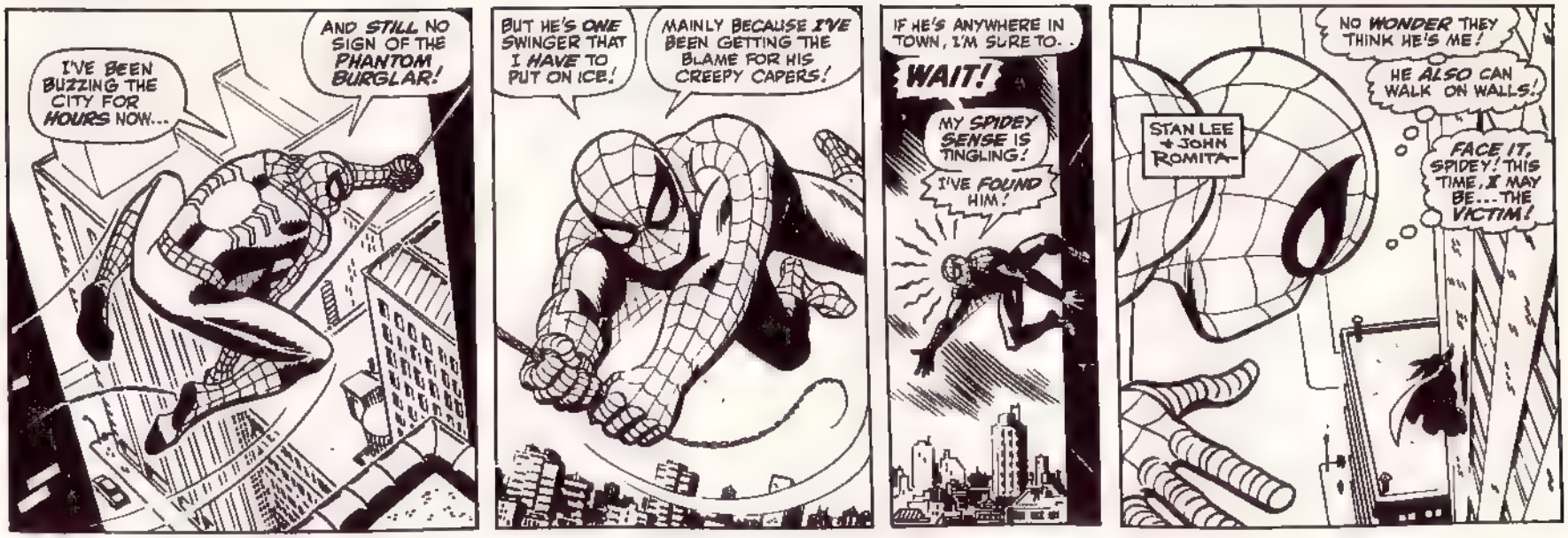

AS THE STRICKEN NIGHT WATCHMAN HELPLESSLY SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR, A SHADOWY FLEEING FIGURE CHORTLES IN FIENDISH GLEE---
ONCE AGAIN I HAVE SUCCEEDED!
AND ONCE AGAIN, IT IS THE INNOCENT SPIDER-MAN WHO WILL BE ACCUSED!
NEXT MORNING, ON THE CAPACIOUS CAMPUS OF GOOD OL' EMPIRE STATE U.---
HEY, PARKER... TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T MAKE THE SCENE WITH YOUR CAMERA LAST NIGHT!
WHY? WHAT HAPPENED?
IT LOOKS LIKE OUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR-HOOD SPIDER-MAN STRUCK AGAIN!
IT HAD TO BE THE WEB-SLINGER...
NOBODY ELSE COULD SCALE A SHEER SKYSCRAPER WALL!
LOOK...THIS PROVES IT! HE ENTERED THRU A WINDOW ON THE 35TH FLOOR!
HE DID, HUH?
DAILY BUGLE
SPIDER-MAN AT IT AGAIN!
35TH FLOOR ROBBERY WATCHMAN INJURED
HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?
WHAT DID YOU RIP MY PAPER FOR?
THAT SINKS IT!
I'M GONNA FIND THAT PHANTOM BURGLAR...OR KNOW THE REASON WHY!
I NEVER SAW PETER LOOK SO ANGRY!
STAN LEE + JOHN ROMITA

SPIDER-MAN

by Stan Lee & John Romita

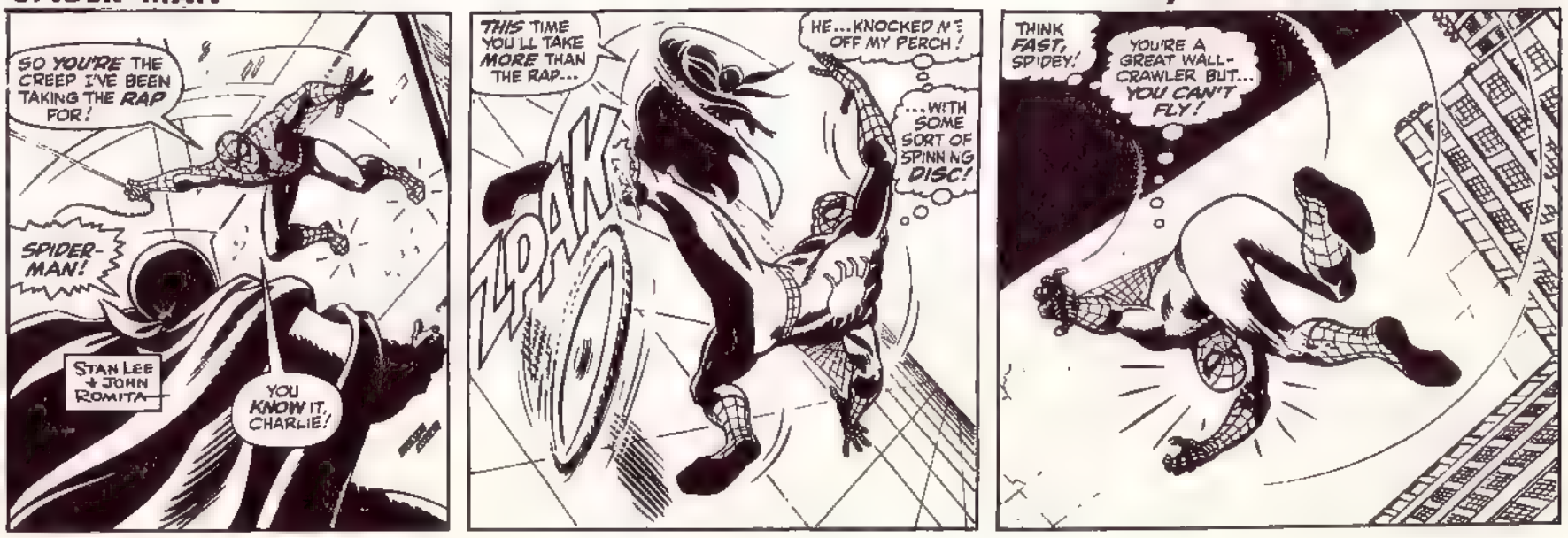

JUST BECAUSE SPIDER-MAN PULLED ANOTHER ROBBERY, WHAT'S PETER SO ANGRY ABOUT?
EVERYONE'S CONVINCED THAT THE PHANTOM BURGLAR IS SPIDEY HIMSELF!
HE'S PROBABLY SORE 'CAUSE HE MISSED A CHANCE TO SNAP SOME PIX OF THE WEB-SLINGER!
WELL, I'M THRU! BEING THIS TOWN'S FRIENDLY, NEIGHBOR-HOOD FALL GUY!
THERE'S ONE SURE WAY TO PROVE THAT SPIDER-MAN IS INNOCENT...!
THUS, IN THE STILL, SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING...
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES... I'M GONNA CATCH THAT CRUMMY MASKED MISFIT...
...IF HE DOESN'T POLISH ME OFF FIRST!
STAN LEE + JOHN ROMITA

SPIDER-MAN **by Stan Lee & John Romita**

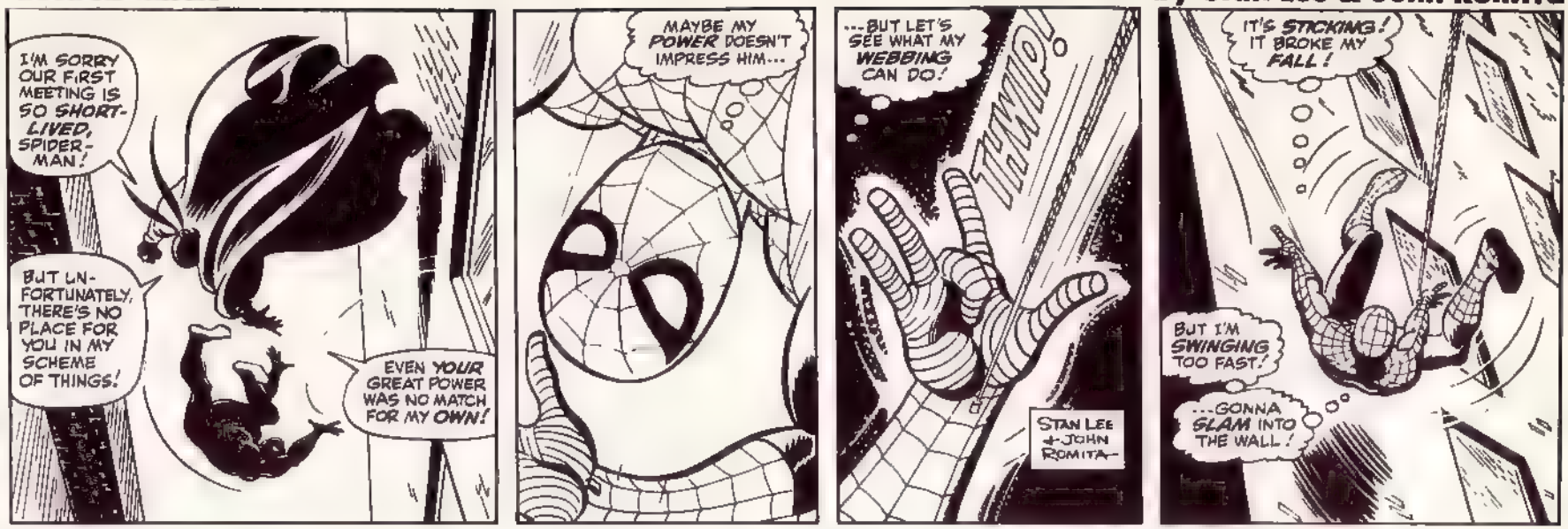

I'VE BEEN BUZZING THE CITY FOR HOURS NOW...
AND STILL NO SIGN OF THE PHANTOM BURGLAR!
BUT HE'S ONE SWINGER THAT I HAVE TO PUT ON ICE!
MAINLY BECAUSE I'VE BEEN GETTING THE BLAME FOR HIS CREEPY CAPERS!
IF HE'S ANYWHERE IN TOWN, I'M SURE TO..
WAIT!
MY SPIDEY SENSE IS TINGLING!
I'VE FOUND HIM!
NO WONDER THEY THINK HE'S ME!
HE ALSO CAN WALK ON WALLS!
STAN LEE + JOHN ROMITA
FACE IT, SPIDEY! THIS TIME, I MAY BE...THE VICTIM!

14

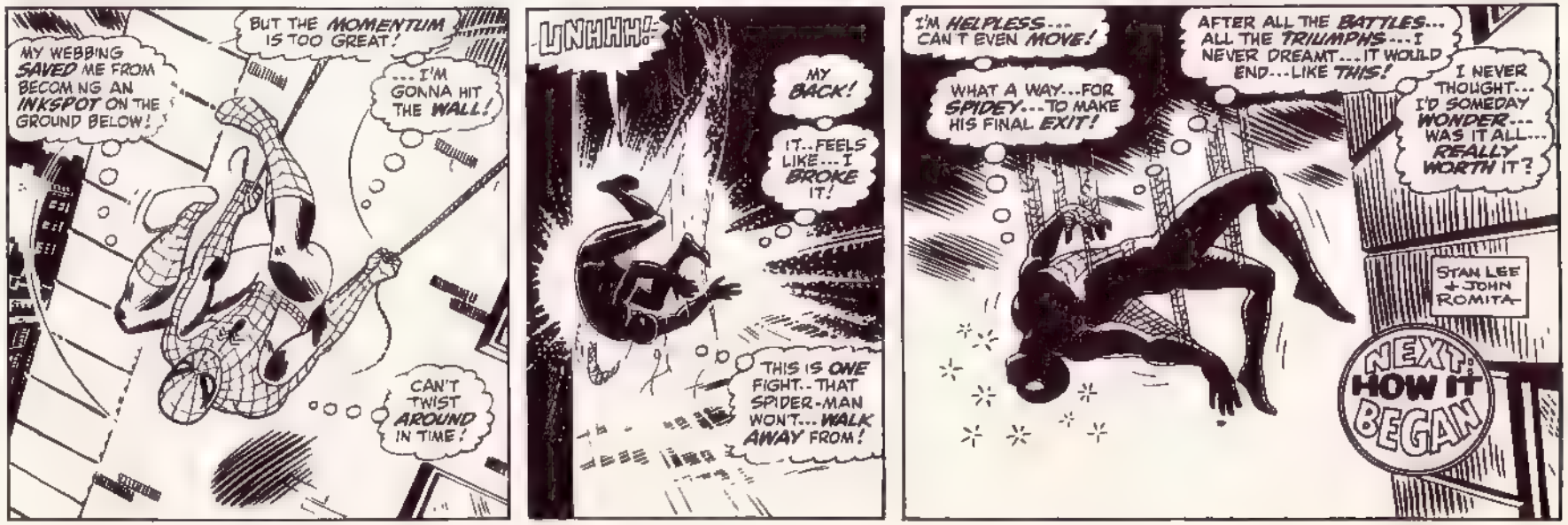
SPIDER-MAN **by Stan Lee & John Romita**


SO YOU'RE THE CREEP I'VE BEEN TAKING THE RAP FOR!
SPIDER-MAN!
STAN LEE + JOHN ROMITA
YOU KNOW IT, CHARLIE!
THIS TIME YOU'LL TAKE MORE THAN THE RAP...
ZIPAK
HE...KNOCKED M OFF MY PERCH!
...WITH SOME SORT OF SPINNING DISC!
THINK FAST, SPIDEY!
YOU'RE A GREAT WALL-CRAWLER BUT... YOU CAN'T FLY!

SPIDER-MAN **by Stan Lee & John Romita**


I'M SORRY OUR FIRST MEETING IS SO SHORT-LIVED, SPIDER-MAN!
BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S NO PLACE FOR YOU IN MY SCHEME OF THINGS!
EVEN YOUR GREAT POWER WAS NO MATCH FOR MY OWN!
MAYBE MY POWER DOESN'T IMPRESS HIM...
...BUT LET'S SEE WHAT MY WEBBING CAN DO!
THWIP!
STAN LEE + JOHN ROMITA
IT'S STICKING! IT BROKE MY FALL!
BUT I'M SWINGING TOO FAST!
...GONNA SLAM INTO THE WALL!

SPIDER-MAN **by Stan Lee & John Romita**


MY WEBBING SAVED ME FROM BECOMING AN INKSPOT ON THE GROUND BELOW!
BUT THE MOMENTUM IS TOO GREAT!
...I'M GONNA HIT THE WALL!
CAN'T TWIST AROUND IN TIME!
UNHHH!
MY BACK!
IT..FEELS LIKE...I BROKE IT!
THIS IS ONE FIGHT..THAT SPIDER-MAN WON'T...WALK AWAY FROM!
I'M HELPLESS... CAN'T EVEN MOVE!
WHAT A WAY...FOR SPIDEY...TO MAKE HIS FINAL EXIT!
AFTER ALL THE BATTLES... ALL THE TRIUMPHS...I NEVER DREAMT...IT WOULD END...LIKE THIS!
I NEVER THOUGHT... I'D SOMEDAY WONDER... WAS IT ALL... REALLY WORTH IT?
STAN LEE + JOHN ROMITA
NEXT: HOW IT BEGAN

MARVELMANIA INTERVIEW

Joe Sinnott

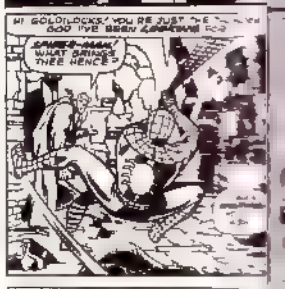
INTERVIEWERS:
MARK EVANIER and
TONY ISABELLA

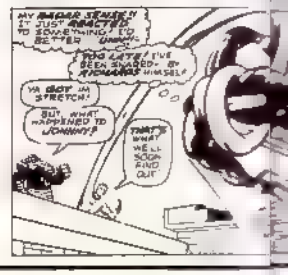
DO YOU EVER GET "THROWN A CURVE"? DO THE PENCILLERS GIVE YOU MATERIAL WHICH MIGHT LOOK GREAT IN PENCIL WITH ITS GRADATIONS OF GRAY, BUT CANNOT BE INKED PROPERLY?
Naturally, there's always a panel which might give an inker a problem, from time to time. Even Kirby did that once in a while. But considering all the work I'd done on Jack, there were really very few problems. I used to change his heads a little bit...the ears or the eyes---Just little small changes that I felt were an improvement and Stan told me to keep doing it. He said they liked the way I'd been inking Kirby's work. He said Kirby does a tremendous job, but he thought I was improving on it. That was long ago, and since nobody ever said anything else about it, I kept on inking Kirby my way. On the other hand, when I inked Gil Kane on two stories, I really didn't enjoy it that much. We weren't compatible. Maybe it was because I'd done Kirby and it was so easy inking Kirby...But I just didn't feel Gil and I worked well together. At the time, I thought there was something I could do to improve the pencils but in looking back, I'm not sure. Before they gave me that assignment someone at Marvel called me--I think it was Sol--and I was asked to fix up Cap's shoulders. Gil was making them too narrow, they felt.

DO THE PENCILLERS EVER RESENT YOU MAKING CHANGES IN THEIR WORK AS YOU INK? I KNOW KIRBY LIKED WHAT YOU DID...
I don't know if Kane resented my inking his shoulders differently...You know, if an artist turns in a job, he won't generally feel there's anything wrong with it. I feel the same way sometime. I remember when I used to work with Tom Gill I would pencil an ear and when Tom would ink it, he'd ink it the way he does ears and I'd think he was ruining my work---I was always proud of the way I drew ears. I wouldn't blame any penciller for feeling that way about an ink job. Looking back now, a kid came up to me last year and asked me how I liked inking Gil Kane and I said I'd never inked Kane--I'd actually forgotten about that job. I remember that when I got the pencils, I'd thought I had to put black areas into it because they looked devoid of blacks. I mean, Kirby--There's no problem. He has nice black areas spotted all over. Kane had them too but they weren't apparent--you couldn't seem them in the penciling. But, as I inked, they came out at me.

SAL BUSCEMA SAID IT WAS HARD TO INK JOHN BUSCEMA BECAUSE IF YOU MISSED HIS LINES SLIGHTLY, YOU RUINED THE DRAWING...
That's true...You have to follow John's lines exactly because everything is just so beautiful and if you don't follow it, you ruin it because you can't draw nearly as good as John can draw. And he has his black areas put in very well. There are no two lines when John draws. There isn't an inker, I don't think, who would not rather ink John's work because it is a pleasure to work on and a pleasure to behold when it's completed. But you've got to be careful. It's hard to really ruin Kirby but that Heck job was difficult. His pencils were so sketchy that I couldn't believe this was the same man who did such tight, fine inking on his own pencils.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU INKED TUSKA?
No, I don't--Isn't that funny? You know George Tuska once beat me out of a syndicated strip job. It was around '57 or '58...I got a call and I was asked to do up some Buck Rogers samples. And I had forgotten completely what Buck Rogers is like. I didn't know what color his hair was--whether it was black or blond. The man told me he had to have it soon....It was a matter of one or two days. And I went home that night and I must have had five or six strips done by morning--pencilled and inked. I've never worked so hard in all my life. I got them out to him maybe noon of the next day and I got an answer back that he liked the way I'd drawn him but that Buck looked a little too much like Flash Gordon. Not knowing exactly what Buck looked like, I'd made him look like Dan Barry's Flash Gordon. I think I also had the hair color wrong on Buck--I should have drawn a helmet on him. So this man--John Dille--had me do some more samples up and he told me that he'd let me know after Labor Day....when they got back to work. So I waited for a week after Labor Day and finally called the office and they told me that John Dille had passed on and his sons were in charge and they had chosen George Tuska. I was disappointed, of course, since I'd felt that Dille was favoring my work and his sons were favoring Tuska's. Looking





back at those samples, though, they were awful. Tuska did a nice job on it. He'd kept the art simple and I'd gone way overboard with detail. Tuska is a pro and he just put so much down and it was real good artwork. I'd followed his work on the old Crime Does Not Pay comics.

A LOT OF PENCILERS LAY THEIR WORK OUT IN BLUE PENCIL AND A LOT OF INKERS HAVE HAD TROUBLE WITH IT AT TIMES. 'DID YOU..?
Yes--I've had problems with it. I don't know why...Maybe it's a little confusing to ink. I inked a Sub-Mariner story by Marie Severin and, at first, I couldn't get into it. She used that blue pencil. But once I got it done, I thought it had come out pretty good. Unfortunately the only book they don't send me is Sub-Mariner, so I've never seen it printed. I had a real tough time inking Buscema on Silver Surfer because of blue pencil. He did it on a plate finish paper and he'd used a blue-grease pencil to block figures out. After I inked it, I began to erase the pencils underneath, and everything...the inking...the lettering began coming off the page. It was John's very first time using blue pencil and I called up Sol and told him that I'd let him worry about it. They took care of it. A lot of my finer ink lines didn't take so John started using a different pencil.

HOW ABOUT STERANKO?
The only reason I didn't like to ink over Steranko was financial--It took much longer than I should have spent on any one job. But I wouldn't cut a corner. I wouldn't leave out a hair of Jim's work. Whatever he had there, I inked. There's nobody with an imagination like Jim's... Kirby's like that, too.

SOMETIMES IN STERANKO STORIES, IT DIDN'T LOOK AS IF YOU'D INKED SOME OF THE DRAWINGS WITH WEIRD VISUAL EFFECTS INVOLVED, SUCH AS ZIP-A-TONE OR DOUBLETONE...
That's right. Sol would have a note not to ink certain panels--Jim would do them and I was glad to have him do it. There was one time Jim did foul me up. Marvel was on his back to get this Captain America in and he got it to them the day before Christmas and I had to work right through the Christmas holidays since it had to be done the day after. I believe Marvel was even harder on Jim to get the book in. I thought Jim's work was great but it took so long to ink that I finally asked to be taken off it.

DID INKING COLAN GO QUICKER?
Yes--And Colan himself must be very fast at pencilling himself. When we were on a tight deadline, I'd get three or four pages a day to ink and his pencilling is very complete. He uses a gradation type of pencilling--He'll go from line shading into solid black. His old war stories were tremendous. Nobody could draw a Chinaman like he could. When I had to do a Navy story, I'd use his destroyers, aircraft carriers, and uniforms for reference. I always thought that his work on Daredevil inked by Giacoia was a fine combination. I don't know why they ever broke that up.

JACK ABEL DID A NICE JOB INKING HIS EARLY IRON MAN STORIES...
Well, I love the way Abel inks Curt Swan over at D.C.

DAN ADKINS IS INKING SWAN NOW...
Oh, Adkins is another fine inker. But I thought Abel was so consistently good on him. I guess they didn't like it at DC.

YOU GAVE UP INKING CAPTAIN AMERICA...
Yes, I had a chance to do some commercial comics for Radio Shack and the opportunity was so good that I couldn't turn it down. I asked Sol to let me off Captain America for it and he said he wished he could do something like that.

HE IS...THAT'S HIS NEW BUSINESS--COMMERCIAL COMIC BOOKS, AMONG OTHER THINGS...
Yes--Well, I pencilled the first one for Radio Shack and they wanted me to ink it but I didn't have time. So I suggested, a good friend--Dick Giordano--to ink it. He did a splendid job just as he did on that Beatles comic I did. The deadline was, like, tomorrow and he pitched in by pencilling the Ringo chapter--By far the best part of the book. It's a shame the other Radio Shack comics haven't yet materialized because they looked good. The backgrounds were by Jack Abel.

BUT THAT WAS ONLY FOR A MONTH OR SO...
Yes--But when I went back to Marvel for more work, someone else was doing Cap. I didn't want to cut in on someone else's work--It wasn't Ayers at that time...

WAS IT FRANK GIACOIA..?
That's right. Well, you can't do better than Giacoia!

GIACOIA DOES A GREAT JOB INKING KIRBY...
Certainly...And another one's Bill Everett. He inked Kirby the way Kirby ought to be inked--exactly as pencilled. I saw Bill at a meeting a few months ago and I asked him why he was taken off Thor...He did such a fine job. He didn't know why and he said that he was just doing some coloring now for Marvel. Everett does a clean, crisp and bold ink job and it's a shame to have him doing coloring.

DO YOU LIKE THE WAY YOUR WORK'S COLORED?
Usually, except when I knock myself out putting detail into something and then a dark purple's put over it. Actually, I think the best color is white. A lot of colorists feel you have to fill up every square inch, but when you leave a lot of white around a character, it makes that character really stand out. Marvel will sometimes put a grey tone on a cover and it will break up the black lines it's on top of. I remember one of the best covers I ever inked of Kirby's was an F.F., a few years back. It had Reed hanging--off a mountain and Jack drew all of his rocks so nicely. It's fun to ink Jack's rocks. I think he's a frustrated bricklayer.□

MARVELMANIA biography page

Harlan Ellison

Harlan Ellison's name is familiar to all science fiction fans and quite a number of people beyond that. It is hard to believe that this reknowned author was working in a book store for a time as he tried to sell his first story. It was while watching the people of New York where he worked, that he received his inspiration for his earliest works, Rumble and The Deadly Streets.

When he moved to California, his career similarly moved--Only instead of moving west, it moved upwards and has been advancing ever since. Currently, he is the author of a widely-read column in the Los Angeles Free Press, where he somehow manages to comment on both the state of the society and the state of television at the same and coincidental time. Quite qualified is he to be a T.V. critic, for his T.V. credits include Star Trek and Outer Limits.

He is the editor of, thus far, three volumes of stories which pass under the collective title of Dangerous Visions. And as for his own writings many consider The Beast That Shouted Love At The Heart of the World to be his finest, and as for his most recent, Over the Edge is a good sampler of his works.

But what interests us most is that he is a comic book fan from way back and has just recently entered the world of comic book writing with what may prove to be one of the most exciting stories in Marvel history. Why the desire to write for comics? "Well friends," he explains, "It's just something I've never done before, and I want to do it all. No more complex than that!"

Joe Sinnott

Very few inkers in comics have been able to distinguish themselves as well as Joe Sinnott. One ink job was all it took for fans to realize that he was the inker for Jack Kirby's Fantastic Four pencils and that he could do wonders in rendering any penciller in an appealing, clean style.

Born October 16, 1926 in New York, Joe soon was drawing his little heart out. He served in the Seabees in Okinawa during World War II and, upon returning to the states, attended the famed Cartoonists and Illustrators School in New York City. [Now called the School of Visual Arts] This was from '49 to '50 and in the same year he completed his training there, he married--And Betty was her name! Since then, four children became an integral part of the Sinnott household--names being: Joe Jr., 18; Linda, 16; Kathy, 14, Mark, 9.

Joe got his start in comics with Tom Gill, drawing for miscellaneous companies. Finally, Timely comics [now Marvel] snatched him up on March 17, 1951, and a happy association began.

In addition to his work for Marvel, Sinnott contributes regularly to Treasure Chest comics, as both penciller and inker on educational material for school-children.

Although Joe lives not far from New York City--it is very rare when he actually gets down there to see the other artists. Attending the convention of comic fans not long ago, Joe was in the same building as Stan Lee for the first time in twelve years--And he's never met Jack Kirby!

THE COMICS CODE

The Comics Magazine Association of America, Inc. was founded in 1954 with the objective of raising the standards of comic magazines to increasingly higher levels through the medium of an industry self-regulation program. Consisting of 90% of all publishers, distributors, printers and engravers engaged in the industry, the CMAA at its inception adopted as the cornerstone of its program the most stringent Code in existence for any communications media.

The Comics Code Authority's Comics Code completely banned all "horror" and "terror" comics and all material which may in any manner be immoral, objectionable or in poor taste. It fosters respect for parents, for police, judges and other governmental officials. It forbids profanity, obscenity, vulgarity; it requires that females be drawn realistically "without exaggeration of any physical qualities." Advertising for the sale of knives, or concealable weapons, is prohibited, as is all questionable merchandise. Each of its 41 provisions is a bulwark against the inclusion in comic books of any material which may be undesirable for exposure to youthful readers.

To insure strict adherence to the Code, the Comics Code Authority was established, headed by a Code Administrator with power to exercise independent judgment, who, assisted by a staff of reviewers, studies and passes upon all reading and pictorial matter, including advertisements, intended for publication in all the comic magazines published by CMAA members.

The Code Administrator is Leonard Darvin, an attorney. Mr. Darvin has been associated with the code enforcement process since 1955, when he joined the CMAA as its executive secretary. He was delegated full responsibility for the administration of the Code some ten years later.

Publisher-members of CMAA submit their original manuscripts and art-work to the Code Authority office well in advance of publication dates. The Administrator and his staff carefully check each panel of art and each line of copy, ordering such changes or deletions as in their judgment violates any tenet or the over-all principle of the Code. Each individual page of copy must receive the Stamp of Approval of the Code Authority before it may be sent to the engraver. The

The outstanding success achieved through the industry's self-regulation program in maintaining high standards of decency and good taste in Code-Approved comic magazines has won the commendation of many governmental and private agencies, as well as of magazine distributors and dealers. The Code Seal of Approval has earned the confidence of parents and civic leaders throughout the country, and has become the accepted symbol of wholesome reading matter for young people.

As a result of the sincere and dedicated cooperation by CMAA members with the program, the comic book medium has truly come of age, providing not only relaxation and good entertainment to millions, but educational and character-building values as well. No other media so absorbs the attention of children—they literally *love* comics—and this applies to many thousands of adults of all ages. Because of their immense popularity, and the constant improvement in the quality of their contents, comics have become a genuine part of the culture of our times.

CODE AUTHORITY
COMICS MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

LEONARD DARVIN
ADMINISTRATOR

Adopted on October 26, 1954, the enforcement of this Code is the basis for the comic magazine industry's program of self-regulation.

CODE FOR EDITORIAL MATTER

General Standards Part A

1) Crimes shall never be presented in such a way as to create sympathy for the criminal, to promote distrust of the forces of law and justice, or to inspire others with a desire to imitate criminals.
2) No comics shall explicitly present the unique details and methods of a crime
3) Policemen, judges, government officials and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority
4) If crime is depicted it shall be as a sordid and unpleasant activity.
5) Criminals shall not be presented so as to be rendered glamorous or to occupy a position which creates a desire for emulation.
6) In every instance good shall triumph over evil and the criminal punished for his misdeeds.
7) Scenes of excessive violence shall be prohibited. Scenes of brutal torture, excessive and unnecessary knife and gun play, physical agony, gory and gruesome crime shall be eliminated.
8) No unique or unusual methods of concealing weapons shall be shown.
9) Instances of law enforcement officers dying as a result of a criminal's activities should be discouraged.
10) The crime of kidnapping shall never be portrayed in any detail, nor shall any profit accrue to the abductor or kidnapper. The criminal or the kidnapper must be punished in every case.
11) The letters of the word "crime" on a comics magazine cover shall never be appreciably greater in dimension than the other words contained in the title. The word "crime" shall never appear alone on a cover.
12) Restraint in the use of the word "crime" in titles or sub-titles shall be exercised.

General Standards Part B

1) No comic magazine shall use the word horror or terror in its title.
2) All scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes, depravity, lust, sadism, masochism shall not be permitted
3) All lurid, unsavory, gruesome illustrations shall be eliminated
4) Inclusion of stories dealing with evil shall be used or shall be published only where the intent is to illustrate a moral issue and in no case shall evil be presented alluringly nor so as to injure the sensibilities of the reader.
5) Scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with walking dead, torture, vampires and vampirism, ghouls, cannibalism and werewolfism are prohibited.

General Standards Part C

All elements or techniques not specifically mentioned herein, but which are contrary to the spirit and intent of the Code, and are considered violations of good taste or decency, shall be prohibited.

Dialogue

1) Profanity, obscenity, smut, vulgarity, or words or symbols which have acquired undesirable meanings are forbidden.
2) Special precautions to avoid references to physical afflictions or deformities shall be taken.
3) Although slang and colloquialisms are acceptable, excessive use should be discouraged and wherever possible good grammar shall be employed.

Religion

1) Ridicule or attack on any religious or racial group is never permissible.

Costume

1) Nudity in any form is prohibited, as is indecent or undue exposure.
2) Suggestive and salacious illustration or suggestive posture is unacceptable
3) All characters shall be depicted in dress reasonably acceptable to society.
4) Females shall be drawn realistically without exaggeration of any physical qualities.

NOTE: It should be recognized that all prohibitions dealing with costume, dialogue or artwork applies as specifically to the cover of a comic magazine as they do to the contents.

Marriage and Sex

1) Divorce shall not be treated humorously nor represented as desirable.
2) Illicit sex relations are neither to be hinted at or portrayed. Violent love scenes as well as sexual abnormalities are unacceptable
3) Respect for parents, the moral code, and for honorable behavior shall be fostered. A sympathetic understanding of the problems of love is not a license for morbid distortion.
4) The treatment of love-romance stories shall emphasize the value of the home and the sanctity of marriage
5) Passion or romantic interest shall never be treated in such a way as to stimulate the lower and baser emotions.
6) Seduction and rape shall never be shown or suggested.
7) Sex perversion or any inference to same is strictly forbidden.

CODE FOR ADVERTISING MATTER

These regulations are applicable to all magazines published by members of the Comics Magazine Association of America, Inc. Good taste shall be the guiding principle in the acceptance of advertising.
1) Liquor and tobacco advertising is not acceptable.
2) Advertisement of sex or sex instruction books are unacceptable
3) The sale of picture postcards, "pin-ups," "art studies," or any other reproduction of nude or semi-nude figures is prohibited.
4) Advertising for the sale of knives, concealable weapons, or realistic gun facsimiles is prohibited.
5) Advertising for the sale of fireworks is prohibited.
6) Advertising dealing with the sale of gambling equipment or printed matter dealing with gambling shall not be accepted.
7) Nudity with meretricious purpose and salacious postures shall not be permitted in the advertising of any product; clothed figures shall never be presented in such a way as to be offensive or contrary to good taste or morals.
8) To the best of his ability, each publisher shall ascertain that all statements made in advertisements conform to fact and avoid misrepresentation.
9) Advertisement of medical, health, or toiletry products of questionable nature are to be rejected. Advertisements for medical, health or toiletry products endorsed by the American Medical Association, or the American Dental Association, shall be deemed acceptable if they conform with all other conditions of the Advertising Code.

This seal of approval appears only on comics magazines which have been carefully reviewed, prior to publication, by the Comics Code Authority, and found to have met the high standards of morality and good taste required by the Code.

To those of you who have begun reading comic books since 1954, the Comics Code symbol pictured above is as much a part of a comic book cover as the name of the magazine...Yet it wasn't always there. In the early fifties, a great deal of public sentiment blamed comic books for causing juvenile delinquency, disrespect for the law and other similar social evils. And, looking at a newsstand of that day, it isn't hard to figure out how that sentiment came to be. Dozens upon dozens of the sleaziest horror and crime comics, few of them in any sort of good taste, literally gutted the comics racks. And, as so often happens in this world, the entire market was characterized by its worst elements.

It is not within the province of this article to judge how valid the claims were that comic books had some direct linkage to certain juvenile criminal cases. Most certainly, there existed a number of comics which sold purely on gore, bloodshed, and sadism. And, just as surely, any number of good comics also existed although, the market being what it was, it was difficult to be in business without being bloody.

Essentially, the problem has to do with image. Comic books were being categorized as mere purveyors of gore, violence, and crime. Parents were forbidding their children to ever buy another comic book and newsstand dealers---generally under a great deal of community pressure---began deciding not to carry comic books at all. There was, obviously, a great problem here for the responsible publishers--The companies which didn't publish these "fly-by-night" horror titles. The good comic books were getting the same treatment as the bad ones. Finally, the Comics Code came into existence as a defensive move by these more responsible publishers who comprised the newly-formed Comics Magazine Association of America.

It should be remembered that the Code was a defensive measure to alleviate the bad image beginning to be given to comics. The guidelines--listed elsewhere--were drawn up by the publisher representatives and a Code Authority--an independent agency--was established to enforce these guidelines.

In its first few months of operation (10/54-1/55) some 375 comics were submitted for approval to the Administrator of the Code Authority. A representative checked over each page to see if it met the standards outlined in the code. Only 181 of the 375 issues required any changes whatsoever, and most of these changes merely amounted to a few words or, at most, redrawing of several panels. On very few occasions was a whole story rejected and refused the Comics Code seal of approval.

In subsequent years, the Code reviewed comic books at fluctuating rates, as shown by the list below...

YEAR	COMICS REVIEWED	COMICS REVISED*
1955	1881	946
1956	1595	676
1957	1355	510
1958	1206	342
1959	1060	141
1960	1041	107
1961	1038	95
1962	1047	138
1963	1049	186
1964	1052	132
1965	1025	189
1966	1189	271
1967	1057	188
1968	1045	302
1969	1110	309
TOTALS	18,125	4,713

The standards outlined for the Comics Code represent one of the strictest self-censorship-policies that any media has ever embarked upon. Because of them, many more distributors started to handle comics and much of the adverse publicity which comics had been receiving vanished--Never to return again.

Although the guidelines in the Code are over fifteen years old, their interpretation is constantly being updated to keep with the times. A provision of the Code prohibits the use of vulgar or obscene words...But it must also be kept in mind that a word which was considered obscene in 1955 and may have been censored from a comic published then may have a different connotation, today. The Code, for example, now allows words and phrases such as "crud", "bloody" (used in a British context) and "making out". This is not so much a change in the Code as it is a natural progression. Vocabularies do change and phrases can have different meanings today then they did in 1954.

It has been argued by some that the Code is a hinderance to the Art aspect of Comic Art. It has been stated by some that...

"Censorship places needless restrictions upon creative freedom and prevents comic books from dealing with many important topics!"

What truth there may be to this feeling is a bit negated by the fact that, unquestionably the best material produced in recent years has been under the Code, whereas little--if anything--has been done of merit in the few publications which do not subscribe to the Code. (Creepy, Vampirella, Eerie, Tales of Voodoo, Web of Horror, Gold Key comics, etc.) In the few instances that the non-Code material has been good, it has not been because of any element which the Code would have forbidden, had the material come under the scrutiny of the Code administrator. It is easy--too easy--to sell on the basis of smut and gore and it inevitably destroys the market.

Were the Code to be lifted, it is very probable that there would be an outbreak of the old blood-and-violence types of comics which were so prevelant in the early fifties. Most certainly, it would destroy many of the markets which comic books have reached.

[KEEP IN MIND THAT THE "REVISED" COLUMN INCLUDES ISSUES IN WHICH ANY CHANGE--SO MUCH AS A SINGLE WORD-CHANGE--WAS MADE.]

Of course, no discussion of the Comic Book Code would be complete without a mention of the old E.C. group, generally considered to have produced some of the best comics of the fifties. EC was the best of the publishers of the horror and crime-type of comics. In many condemnations of comic books in the fifties, E.C. was the first one mentioned as being harmful and the most-reprinted for example purposes. [Almost every article which claimed in any way that comics were harmful reprinted Jack Davis' horror story for EC in which human heads were used as baseballs in a monsterous baseball game.] Granted, they had one of the finest creative staffs ever assembled and they produced a number of stories which stand out as classics in the comic field--But most of their better works, were outside of their crime and horror comics. A number of their later issues even were approved by the Comics Code and, if there was any lessening of quality, it was only because EC was dying out anyway. For one of their last science-fiction comics, they submitted a story to the Comics Code drawn by Angelo Torres and dealing with mutants. The story was rejected by the Code and a reprint had to be substituted. The reprint was one of EC's best stories, "Judgment Day" and it cleared the Code Authority with only minor discussion. It had originally been done before the Code and, as evidenced by its reprinting, could just as easily have been done under the Code. It would be unfair to suggest, as many have, how it was the Comics Code that killed E.C.. Rather it could be said that the Code was a move to save, and prevent the other companies from falling to the "anti-comic" sentiment which doomed EC.

Marvel comics, like any others, go to the Comics Code office before they go to the printers. Each page is checked and corrections, when necessary, must be made before the issue is entitled to bear the Comics Code stamp. Even reprinted stories which have already been approved must be checked over before they can be published again.

One of the most famous changes which Comics Code officials made in a Marvel comic took place in Nick Fury #2 in the love scene between Valerie and Fury. One panel which, as drawn by Steranko, showed a telephone off the hook was ordered changed. (Johnny Romita redrew it so that the phone was on the hook.) The final panel on that page showed Val and Fury locked in an embrace---which the Code deemed out of line with its standards. A close-up of a drawing from another panel of that page was substituted.

It can hardly be argued that the Code damaged Steranko's story. As always, they worked for the happy medium which would keep the story intact, but still conform to Code guidelines. The Comics Code Authority works with the comic book industry, and not against it.

What the Comics Magazine Association's Comic Book Code has managed to do is to set down some industry-wide standards, so that publishers will not be competing for sales on the basis of just how much gore or sex there is on the cover of an issue.

From time to time, the Code is also accused of being too lax--Allowing things to appear in a comic which have no business being presented to children. A recent letter from a clergyman and parent complimented the Code for its position on morality, but complained that they were not very strict about violence--That things only get accomplished through violence and force in comics, and to impressionable youths, this can present a rather distorted picture of reality.

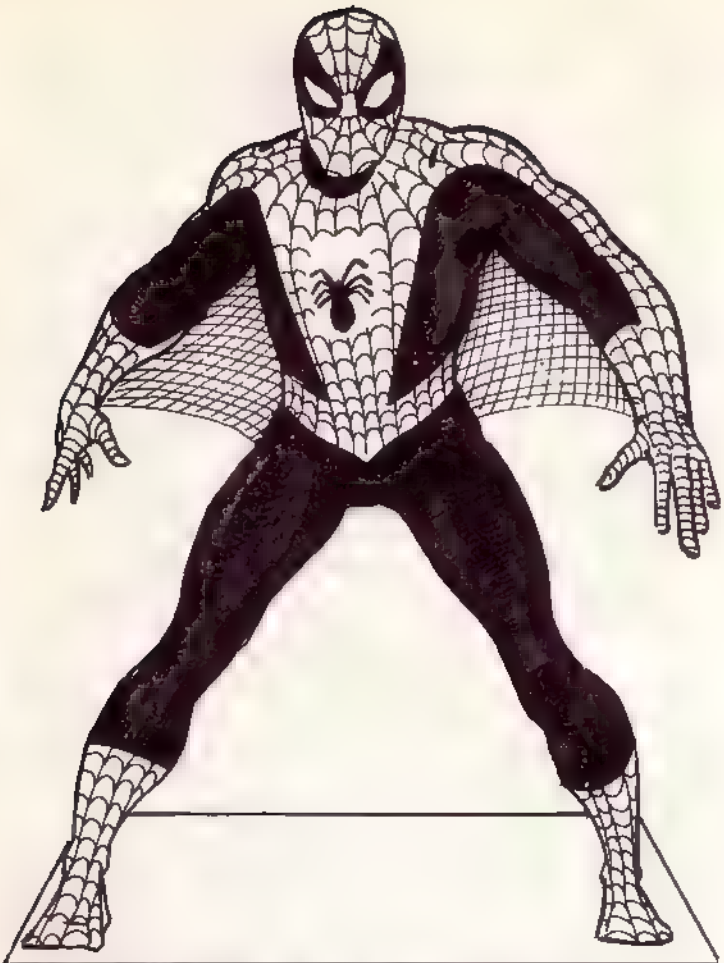
The current Administrator of the Code is attorney Leonard Darvin who answered that the Code in its annual report for 1968 made great mention of steps being taken to meet their responsibility in that area. The text of the Code bans advertising for knives and concealable weapons and has only recently been extended so that it forbids the advertising of air rifles and toys that create a "psychology of violence". This has amounted to the situation that toy guns which are still being sold in Boys Life are no longer permitted in comic books. Mr. Darvin also forwarded to the gentleman, a copy of a news story from the New York Times about how the Protestant Episcopal Church, through its House of Bishops and House of Deputies, commended the comic book industry for its efforts to clean up the horror.

More recently, the Commission on Obscenity & Pornography established by Congress requested a statement from the Comics Magazine Association--regarding its views on obscenity. Part of CMAAs statement made mention of its having received an award for "distinguished acheivment" from the US Chamber of Commerce.

In a time when comics have found it difficult to appeal to older readers, it has been offered up as a reason that the Code prevents comics from dealing with material in an adult fashion and from dealing with certain matters which have a more direct appeal to the older market. A number of such critics have gone so far as to be starting a move amongst comic fans (as yet, it's a very small campaign with no significant amount of supporters) to abolish or drastically revise the Code. There is really no case for abolishing it at present...And the arguments for revision seem misdirected. The critics are questioning the application of the standards and not the standards themselves.

The Code forbids certain things. Were the Code not to be in existence, it is doubtful that all these things would immediately appear in the pages of D.C. and Marvel comics. The people involved in the creative process at these companies have enough taste and good judgment not to, immediately, publish Smut Comics and/or Ax Murder Illustrated. But it requires virtually none of the skills which comics now possess to sell a comic on the basis of gore and sex. The Code is protecting responsible publishers from the shock and shlock market--It is protecting the title of Comic Book from winding up on a magazine filled to overflowing with dismembered heads and wanton women. The image of how comics affect children is not so good that it can stand an influx of an element like that. There is always public sentiment, as long as you are selling to the public, to be reckoned with. And while it may seem that in our new enlightened age with its new morality and its new permissiveness, no banning of comics could ever take place, it was not so long ago we saw all the super-heroes kicked off the Saturday morning cartoon shows. Those were comparatively harmless heroes.

That this theoretically-factual article has led around to an editorial viewpoint supporting the Code is not inconsistent with the subject. A good debate could easily be staged and go on for months without resolving anything. There are a number of instances where the Code seems to have been too strict, but this is bound to be true in a situation where you're leaving a value estimation up to an independent agent. It is the opinion of the editorial staff of this mag----[all of him] that the Comics Code has been instrumental in comics still existing today.



GRAPHIC TRAFFIC

by Mark Evanier

I read my first issue of the Amazing Spider-Man in, of all places, my orthodontist's office. As I recall, he was making a cast of my mouth in preparation of outfitting me with so many braces that you could lead me around, by the mouth with a magnet. That mold-gook which they use was in the process of setting and I had to do something to take my mind off the agony, so I began browsing through a stack of comics convienently placed by each chair for just such an occasion. The first few were Baby Huey, Casper, etc. I was so desperate for something to read that I made mental notes that if I didn't find something better at the bottom of the stack, I would come back to read: "Little Dot Gets Acne" or some such Harvey classic. Farther down, I did indeed find something better; It was the first Brave and Bold of the Justice League of America.

Minor digression: An orthodontist's office, I have found, is one of the greatest places in the world to find old comics. We've all heard jokes about how doctors will have twelve-year-old magazines in their waiting rooms and, in many cases indeed, that is true. But we comic collectors--We like old magazines; Especially old comic magazines. In fact, one day my orthodontist, some years later, called me and asked me to drop in--for a surprise. I was afraid we'd missed a payment and he wanted to repossess my teeth. But as I walked in, he handed me a stack of old comics which some naive patient had given him. Amongst the stack were old issues of Captain Marvel (And I mean the Captain Marvel--the one with "Shazam" and all that!) and early issues of Superman and a mess of real early Walt Disney comics, none of which contained work by the great Carl Barks but many of which contained work by a gentleman name of Walt Kelly. My shrewd orthodontist knew that these things were rare and he knew that I had a mania for such publications and he knew that if he appeased me with these, I might not bite down on his finger, next time he put it in my mouth. Anyway, orthodontist's offices are a great place to get old comics, as long as you don't mind if they have little pieces of wire, cement, and few if any blood stains in them.

Speaking of Spider-Man as I haven't yet, I finished off that vintage JLA classic and went onward, the concrete overbite replica not fully hardened. The only thing left to read was this issue of the Amazing Spider-Man, a new title of Marvel's at the time and one which many friends had advised me to pick up. I picked it up. I went so far as to read it. I even considered a possibility of stealing it, but I knew my orthodontist would give it to me if I asked so naturally it would be no fun to steal it. It was good--The story dealt with a villain named Doctor Octopus and it read pretty well. But then, what did I know--? I had a mouthful of cement!

As I left the orthodontist's office, Spidey under my arm, I wondered what all those kids in the world with straight teeth do for their comic books. Pity.

And so it happened that Spider-Man grew up as my teeth grew into alignment. I followed it regularly and, last year when I went back to my orthodontist's office for my annual check-up, I got all nostalgic looking at the same comics he had there seven years ago and that somehow led into a discussion with friends of how Spidey had changed over the years...

To be perfectly blunt, the original concept of Spider-Man was not so unique as to break the mold or even dent it. As a so-called super-hero, he was entering a literary world which had already been over-populated with caped and non-caped crusaders. Dozens of super-doers had obtained capabilities far beyond those of mortal men and/or women in laboratory accidents. When Peter Parker, boy bookworm, got chomped upon by a renegade arachnid, it was hardly a new, different origin. His powers and costume may have been somewhat unusual, but the general attitude towards him may well have been: "What's he got that all them other heroes named after animals ain't got?" The answer might very well be that he had a sense of humor.

Although "tongue-in-cheek" isn't exactly the right term to describe the early issues of Spider-Man, it isn't far off. Perhaps a better way to describe them would be to say that they often carried the humor of reality. There was a reexamination of the super-hero concept and it showed that the idea of a masked man running around, crawling up walls, is pretty silly at times. It is refreshing to see that Peter Parker often did not take this role seriously, as exemplified by quips such as: "Whatza matter? Didn't you ever see a guy in a Spider-Man suit before?" (I'm not sure he ever used those exact words, but you get the idea--!) One of my favorite sequences was a

THE ORIGIN OF ODIN

In the first centuries after Christ, when the general movement of Celts and Germans was getting under way, there were signs in Denmark of new customs connected with battle and the dead. In rich Danish cemeteries we find the symbolism of a banquet within the grave. The wealthy dead were provided with dishes of meat and goblets or horns of mead and ale, together with an impressive dinner service of cups, plates, jars and knives. Sometimes a wine strainer was given to the dead to hold, or a cup left within reach of the hand. The inspiration for such a custom seems to have come from the aristocratic warriors of the Celts, whose ancestors were buried in the Hallstatt 'wagon graves' further east. Among the Celtic people, the banquet long remained an important ritual, and joints of pork, in particular, were shared out according to strict rules of precedence.

FEASTING IN VALHALLA

It is possible that such customs and the ideas behind them helped to establish the long literary tradition in Scandinavia of the feasting of warriors in Valhalla. Here reigned Odin, god of death and battle (the Wodan of the Germans and Woden of the Anglo-Saxons), who has given his name to the fourth day of the week in Scandinavia and English-speaking countries. He was believed to welcome into his hall warriors who died a heroic death on the battlefield. Each night they feasted on joints of pork from a boar whose flesh never gave out, and drank copiously of mead. The day was spent in fighting, but every night those who had fallen were raised up again to partake of the feast. In the literature the reason given for Odin's hospitality was that he was collecting a mighty host from among the noble dead to follow him in the last great battle, when the gods would have to fight for survival against monsters and giants. His special champions, the *einherjar*, were to lead the ranks of his warriors on that day.

THE CULT OF KINGS

It was said of Odin that he set kings a-warring, or, as Saxo put it,'he weaves the dooms of the mighty and fills Phlegthon with noble shapes'. For the worshippers of Odin were the kings and princely warriors of the Migration period and the Viking Age, and many royal families among the Anglo-Saxons were proud to count themselves his descendents. To leaders who promised to dedicate those whom they slew to the god,he gave out weapons, such as the splendid sword Gram had given to Sigmund the Volsung. Odin himself plunged the sword deep into the tree forming the central pillar of the family hall, so that only the hand of the young hero who had won his favour was able to withdraw it. For many years Sigmund fought heroically for Odin, but at last the end came, when the god decided that it was time for the king to join his warriors in the Other World. Odin himself, as a one-eyed man in a blue cloak and broad-brimmed hat, met him in the midst of the fighting, and shattered the wonderful sword with his own spear.

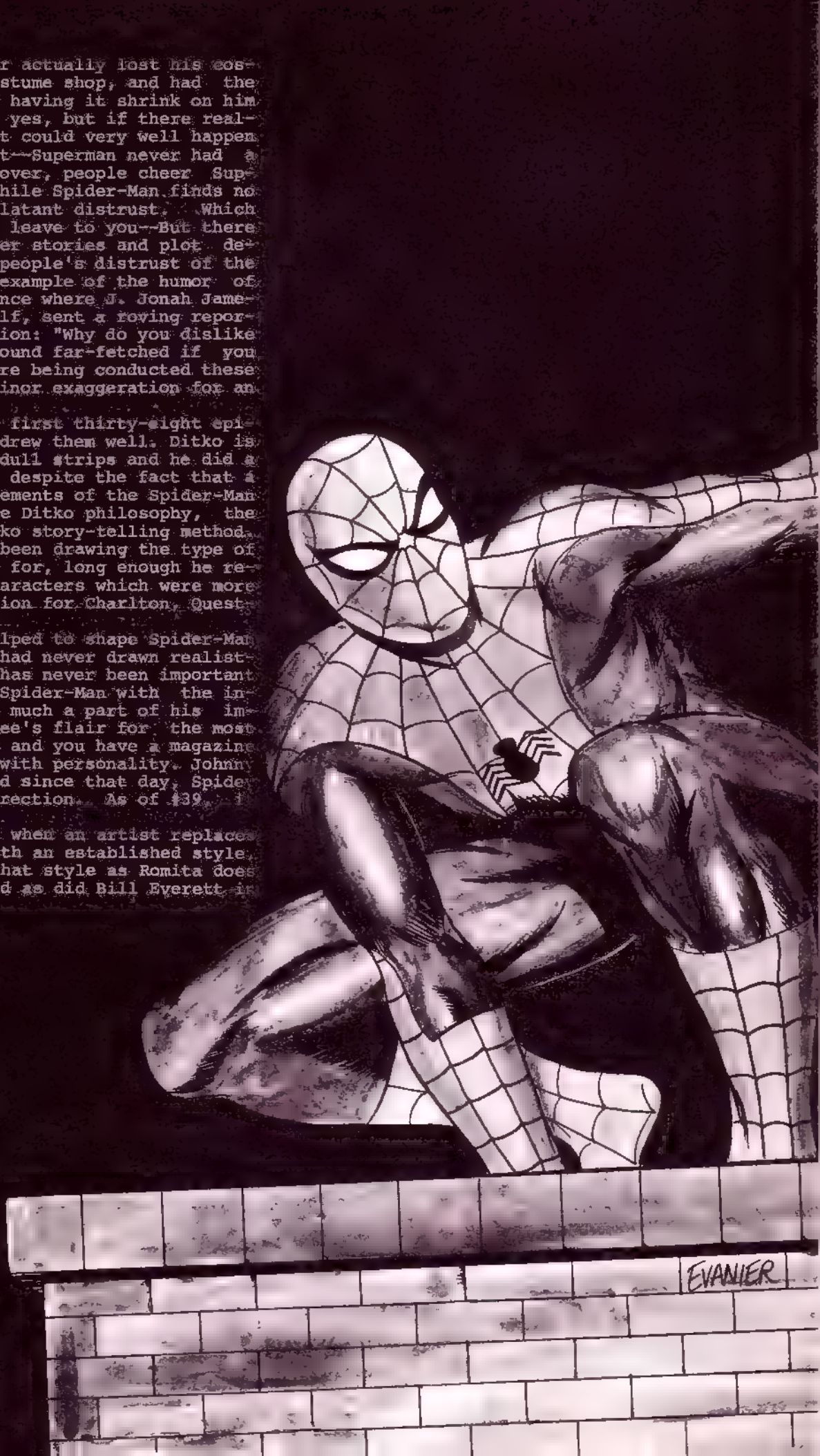
Saxo has other similar incidents in his collection of stories about the kings of Denmark. On one occasion the same old man with one eye appeared to King Harald War-tooth, and made a pact with him, promising him to grant him victory if Harald would dedicate to him all those whom he slew in battle. But again the day came when Odin withdrew his favour. He stirred up a quarrel with Harald's friend and ally, King Hring, and when the two kings met in battle, he took the place of Harald's charioteer and flung him down from the chariot even as Harald pleaded with him for one further victory. The king was pierced by his own sword as he fell. It is hardly surprising that both in the early poems and in the later prose stories Odin is continually accused of treachery and broken faith, since his promise of victory to his followers was something which, in the very nature of things, could not be kept for ever. In a poem of the tenth century on the death of one of the heathen kings of Norway, Eric Bloodaxe, the god is asked by the hero Sigmund, now in Valhalla, why he had chosen to let Eric be robbed of victory when he was so valiant. Odin's re-

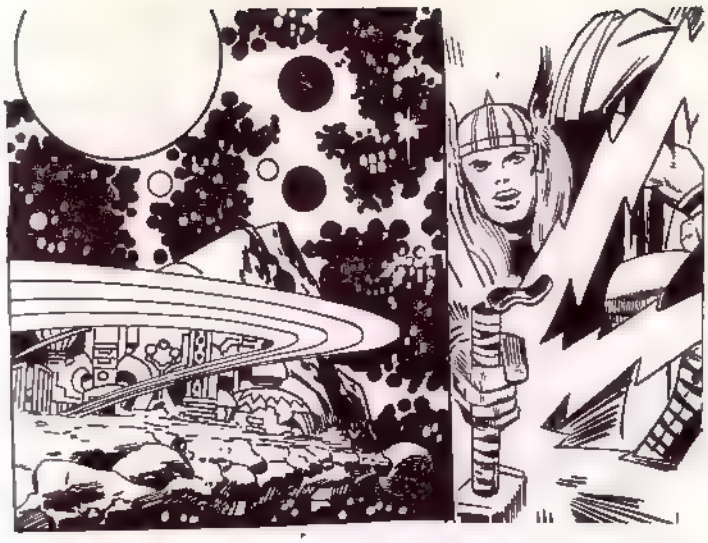
few years back when Peter actually lost his costume, bought one in a costume shop, and had the embarassing situation of having it shrink on him after a dousing. Silly, yes, but if there really was a Spider-Man, that could very well happen to him. Leave us face it--Superman never had a problem like that. Moreover, people cheer Superman wherever he goes while Spider-Man finds no cheering crowds--often blatant distrust. Which is more realistic, we'll leave to you--But there were certainly many clever stories and plot developments built around people's distrust of the masked web-spinner. An example of the humor of reality might be a sequence where J. Jonah Jameson, Mr. Cutie-pie himself, sent a roving reporter out to ask the question: "Why do you dislike Spider-Man?" That may sound far-fetched if you haven't seen how polls are being conducted these days--Then it's only a minor exaggeration for an artistic effect.

Steve Ditko drew the first thirty-eight episodes of Spider-Man and drew them well. Ditko is never known for drawing dull strips and he did a marvelous job on Spidey, despite the fact that a goodly portion of the elements of the Spider-Man strip ran contrary to the Ditko philosophy, the Ditko style, and the Ditko story-telling method. When Ditko decided he'd been drawing the type of character he didn't care for, long enough he resigned and went on to characters which were more up his alley. His creation for Charlton, Question, was more his style.

But his style had helped to shape Spider-Man and to mold him. Ditko had never drawn realistically, but that factor has never been important in comics. He embodied Spider-Man with the insect feeling that was so much a part of his image. Add to this Stan Lee's flair for the most clever dialogue possible and you have a magazine which literally wreaked with personality. Johnny Romita replaced Ditko and since that day, Spidey has taken a different direction. As of #39, it was a whole new strip...

It is customary that when an artist replaces an established artist with an established style, he will try to emulate that style as Romita does now on Fantastic Four and as did Bill Everett in





ply is: 'The grey wolf is watching the abode of the gods', and the implication of the myth is clear: the bound monster who was ultimately to devour Odin was waiting for the end to come, since the god himself was not immune from the law of ultimate defeat inherent in our mortality, the law to which even the strongest must eventually bow.

BATTLE SACRIFICES

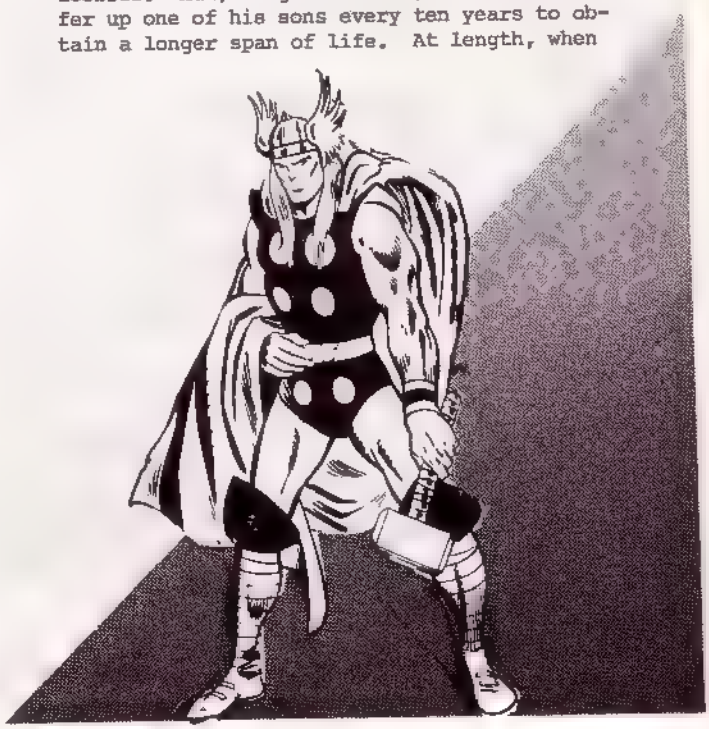
There are many stories of kings making pacts with Odin to deliver to him those killed in battle, and sacrifices to him as god of the dead are freqently mentioned in the literature. Tacitus tells us of two Germanic tribes who fought for the possession of a sacred place, each vowing to their god that in return for victory they would sacrifice all that they won, men and booty alike; and one of the gods mentioned is Mercury, who is the Roman equivalent for the Germanic god Wodan.

Startling confirmation for such stories comes from the peat bogs of Denmark and Sweden, where, for a period extending from the Celtic Iron Age, shortly before the birth of Christ, to about the sixth century A.D., great offering places were established in the marshes, some of which have now been carefully excavated. The peat has preserved many of the objects laid down in bogs or thrown into pools, and while some of the offerings were associated with agriculture and fertility, there seems no doubt that part of them consisted of plunder from defeated armies. Swords and shields have been found in abundance, as also have coats of mail, spears and bows and arrows, war-canoes like the Hjortspring boat filled with warriors' equipment, along with clothes, ornaments, metal vessels and other valuable possessions which may or may not have been booty taken in war. The weapons and mail were often bent and broken in pieces or burnt on a fire before being left in the place of offering or thrown into the water. Some warriors in Scandinavia evidently acted in the same way as the Celts are described by Caesar to have done in the first century B.C., leaving piles of booty on holy ground, where no man dared tamper with it because a horrible death was the penalty for such sacrilege.

RITUAL HANGING

Not only inanimate objects have been found in the bogs. Skeletons of horses have been found too, and over the years a gruesome series of human bodies. Some of these, such as the man from Tollund in Denmark whose serene face implies a calm resignation in the face of death, had a rope round the neck, a sign of death by strangulation. Stories from the literature and evidence from foreign writers are in agreement that sacrifices to Odin took place by strangling, while at the same time the victim was stabbed with a spear. The bodies of the men and animals sacrificed were left hanging from trees. Captives in war were said to have been dispatched in this way, and as late as the eleventh century there is an account in the history of Adam of Bremen of bodies of men and animals seen dangling from trees in the sacred grove at Uppsala. The old man who provided the information recalled seeing these when he visited the temple.

The most detailed description of this kind of sacrifice comes from the story of the death of a Viking leader, King Vikar, who had prayed to Odin for a favourable wind. He drew lots to decide which of his men was to be sacrificed in return for the granting of his petition. The lot fell upon the king himself, and his men staged a mock sacrifice. They set their leader on a tree stump with a calf's intestines round his neck instead of a rope, looped round a young tree which they held down beside him. The man standing beside the king, who was a faithful follower of Odin, touched Vikar with a rod and uttered the words: 'Now I give you to Odin'. At that instant the soft intestines became a tough rope, and the rod turned into a spear and pierced the king through. The tree shot upwards, with the dead king hanging from it. Such a ritual killing is shown on one of the Gotland stones from the Viking Age. An eagle, the bird of Odin, perches above the victim. It would seem indeed that sacrificial victims were not always captives taken in war. There are grim tales of kings sacrificing their sons to gain their desires. Aun, king of Sweden, was said to offer up one of his sons every ten years to obtain a longer span of life. At length, when



replacing Ditko on Dr. Strange. Nine times out of ten, the imitative approach fails for either or both of two good reasons:

1) The artist being replaced [who hereafter shall be referred to as the "replacee"] does not draw exactly the same way as the artist replacing him [who hereafter shall be referred to as the "replacer"]. The replacer can probably do a better job of story-telling in his own style to which he is accustomed. In drawing Dr. Strange, Everett altered his style somewhat and used Ditko's conceptions of the characters, even to the extent of photostatting old Ditko panels and using them throughout his stories. Everett's work on Doc can therefore be described as a temporary fill-in, rather than an attempt to find a Ditko-less direction for the comic.

2) The replacer is only doing a temporary--a non-lasting kind of job. He cannot imitate the replacee forever and will probably never come up with his own direction.

Romita, to his credit, made no effort to imitate Ditko despite that readers, accustomed to a particular style, would be wildly indignant at any Spidey artist who drew differently. Although the change may have come abruptly, it was beneficial that they didn't imitate Ditko. Such an imitation would only have amounted to prolonging the eventuality that Spidey would have to be the Ditko-less comic that it is today.

Romita's interpretation of Spider-Man was an interesting one--He toned down the "wall-crawling" atmosphere of the strip and made the people look a little more realistic.

One of the major changes was that the focal point of the strip became Peter Parker much more than before and frequently more than Spider-Man. As Ditko drew him, Peter Parker was mild, meek, and lukewarm like many people. When he put that webbed-zoot suit on, his true personality emerged. Parallels have been suggested in early issues to what comic book experts call the reknown "Clark Kent syndrome".

You are meek and timid and indifferent and a bore and everybody picks on you, just as everybody picks on that guy with the glasses in those funny-books. You have always longed to be able to beat the tar out of them all with one blow. A guy in the comics like Peter Parker can actually do it if he wants and knowing you can do it's as good as actually doing it. Reader identification is the word. You see some qualities in the hero that you know you have and some qualities in him that you wish you had--When he goes after supervillains, you go with him. On his side.

This syndrome was present in those early issues of Spider-Man...The ones with the satirical slant to them. It was so typically super-heroic to have a runty alter-ego that it contrasted so well with the uniqueness of Spidey himself. Pete was our constant reminder of how different Spider-Man was from Superman, Batman, et al.

However, by the time Romita took over, there had been that natural evolution which had somehow aged our hero and toughened him. No longer was he Marvel's answer to Caspar Milquetoast and no longer was being Spider-Man his whole life.

Peter Parker had been nothing before spidery tooth marks appeared on his hand. Had not that radio-active power penetrated his blood, he'd be one of those dull, non-exciting people that you see all over--Reading Dale Carnegie books, going to Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna movies, going on Tunnel of Love rides alone, guesting on a Virginia Graham Show...dull folk with nothing of excitement to their lives, outside of finding a few lumps in their chocolate-flavored Malt-O-Meal. Imagine how out-of-place Mary Jane Watson--an exciting young lady if ever there was one and there certainly have been some--would have been in those early issues of Spider-Man. Peter Parker, as he was in those issues, would have swallowed his glasses if she'd as much as smiled at him. But when she appeared in an early Romita-drawn issue, the time was right--Peter had turned into a pretty swinging young man and it seemed far from inappropriate that he have a female-friend who was the same way.

The change was also apparent in Spider-Man's relationship to Peter Parker. In the P.R. period (Pre-Romita) it was possible to believe Spidey was Peter Parker with a mask on. His over-bearing and wise-cracking personality was just Peter Parker's real personality breaking out from beneath the shell which his up-bringing had formed about him. Somehow, the P.D. (Post-Ditko) stories made him seem skizophrenic; like two different people who, through some magical spell, were not able to appear at the same time, one having to go into limbo while the other roamed the New York streets.

Readers could identify with Peter, what with all his problems, and with Spider-Man, what with his clever remarks--But it was difficult to connect the empathy for the two: You liked Pete and you liked Spidey--but not, as before, because it was satisfying to see the shlep (Pete) turn into the success (Spidey). And Spider-Man was indeed becoming a success.

Ditko's period found Spider-Man disliked by the entire population of New York with the ironic exception of Parker's rival, Flash Thompson--the Galoop of the Gridiron. Come the era of Romita and Spider-Man is Mr. Popularity. The only person hating him was a certain crew-cut editor, whose hatred became so fanatical that it was not to be taken seriously. Only in isolated incidents (when it appeared Spidey had stolen or that he was a murderer) did public sentiment turn at all away. Quite frequently we heard someone say words to the effect: "I don't think Spider-Man's as much of a menace as they say!" Problem is we never heard anyone outside of a lunatic JJJ say that Spider-Man was a menace. When he did battle with Medusa, he was clearly the hero.

Whether or not the change in Spider-Man was for the better is clearly a matter of personally directed tastes. There are those who feel that the plotting and dialog are far better now under the present format and that the maturing of the hero heightens the empathy and that the old version couldn't have lasted much longer and it was time for an overhaul anyway. The fact that Ditko quit merely made it mandatory.

Personally, I enjoy both versions for their own merits. I would like to see a greater unity between Peter Parker and Spider-Man and also the return of a little of that "humor of reality" we spoke of some picas back. Though there have appeared issues I disliked and some I could not even bear to read, following the exploits of the Amazing Spider-Man has been an enjoyable experience...

...And to think it all started in an orthodontist's office!

he had grown so old that he was as helpless as a child, the Swedes forbade the sacrifice of his last son, and Aun died, without honour. Another vivid little story is that of the woman who asked Odin for help in brewing ale. He asked in return that she should give to him whatever lay between her and the vat. This turned out to be the unborn child she was carrying, whose story is told in the course of the saga.

THE SPEAR OF ODIN

The type of sacrifice most typical of the cult of Odin was that of men killed in battle or put to death by the victors, and the symbol for a warrior's death was the spear. Odin's great treasure was his mighty spear Gungnir, which could determine victory by the direction which it took over the battlefield. On one early stone from Gotland a spear can be seen passing above a ship, so that this conception may go back as early as the Migration period. Long after Christianity came to Iceland it was still thought a lucky omen to throw a spear over the heads of an advancing band of enemies, as described in one of the Icelandic sagas. The spears so frequently buried with men in heathen times, and tiny model spears found in graves of boys or worn as amulets by the dead, may well have been linked with the cult of the god of battle and have been the mark of his followers.

THE RING OF ODIN

Dedicated Warriors who fought without defensive armour because they counted themselves under the protection of the god were known among the Germans at the time of Tacitus. He tells us that some of these wore metal collars to show that they were in the god's service. This may explain the magnificent collars formed of bands of gold surviving from the Migration period in Sweden. They are among the greatest treasures of the time.

(THIS HAS BEEN THE FIRST INSTALLMENT IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON NORSE MYTHOLOGY, PRESENTED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE TO FILL YOU IN ON THE ACTUAL NORSE MYTHOLOGY BACKGROUND TO THOR. FUTURE INSTALLMENTS INCLUDE ODIN'S CHAMPIONS AMONG OTHER INFORMING TOPICS. THE SECOND INSTALLMENT IN A SERIES OF THREE WILL APPEAR NEXT ISSUE.)

Captain America and the Scarlet Witch's victory over Attuma's underwater forces had saved a world. But for Hawkeye, who along with Quicksilver had arrived at the battle only to be rescued from slightly unfavorable odds by Cap and Wanda, the victory brought an unpleasant realization home. The Avengers could get along without him. His long-running feud with Captain America was coming to its conclusion, hastened by the appearance of two people from their respective pasts.

Returning to headquarters, the Avengers receive an urgent summons from Henry Pym. The Wasp is missing! Fearful for her safety and realizing that only a call from a former member can be her salvation, Pym reveals his (then-retired and unused) identity as Giant-Man to Cap and the others. Hawkeye, after exchanging pleasantries is sent to bring Hank to Tony Stark's mansion.

Hawkeye and his passenger arrive in time to hear an ultimatum from the Collector, the madman who has captured the Wasp and wants to add more Avengers to his collection as he did the supervillain called the Beetle, whom we mentioned in our last chapter. The Collector demands the Avengers come to his castle. And, with the Wasp's life hanging in the balance, they must agree.

In a time of crisis, we see many things. Cap welcomes the reappearance of Henry Pym, probably feeling that he will be able to delegate the leadership of the group to him. Quicksilver with the Scarlet Witch seem excited at the prospect--That of fighting alongside one of the original Avengers. Only Hawkeye, who had always hoped to replace Cap as leader of the team, is hostile to the blond stranger. It is Hawkeye who questions Hank's identity, though Cap is quick to see that a test is necessary before they can receive this man as one of their own.

The test is simple enough.

"All he has to do is change size for us!"

--And with Captain America's words, we see a fear creep into the eyes of Henry Pym. For one of the reasons the former Giant-Man had resigned from the Avengers was because he had learned how changing size as often as necessary in his career as a fighter harmed his body. He feared the unimaginable strain might some day prove fatal.

And in this stating of facts, we see the reason Goliath's problems would overshadow those of the other Avengers. We see a brave man--very brave, but also a very real man. He is afraid--but he conquers his fears for the sake of a loved one. And when this very brave, very real and very good man suffers for his heroism, it has a great effect on us all. It affects us all deeply. Could childish squabbles hold our attention after viewing the tragic fate of this man?

After explaining that he can only attain one height now--25'--and that he must remain at that

height for fifteen minutes [changing much sooner or later making for too great a strain] Hank begins to prove his identity. While Wanda is getting a costume she had designed in the event of Giant-Man's returning, Cap gives Hank a chance--a chance to back out and to let him and the others go after the Wasp. But Hank will not accept the out. He will not desert her when she needs him. This convinces Captain America that Giant-Man has indeed rejoined their number, but others remain to be convinced. When Wanda has returned with the costume, the sight of an average-sized-man becoming a 25-foot giant dispels their doubt and Goliath now walks among the Avengers.

Following the Collector's instructions, the Avengers are soon at their destination--a castle hidden within a line of desolate hills. In typical Marvel fashion, the Avengers are captured--by the Collector, only to break free. A mad run through the massive castle follows as the Avengers attempt to reach the wonderful Wasp before the Collector can reach the dungeon where he has imprisoned the lovely crime-fighter. Along the way, the heroes dispose of the Beetle and a pair of unwashed giants. The Collector, grabbing his temporal assimilator, escapes but empty-handed.

But the real damage has been done. Goliath has stayed at his 25-foot height too long and as he attempts to shrink to normal height, he gives out and faints at ten feet. The shocked expressions on the faces of those closest to Henry Pym tell the tragic story. If he has lost the power to change size, Henry Pym will remain at this 10 foot height for the rest of his life. And, next issue, a doctor confirms the probability of the strain required to shrink being fatal.

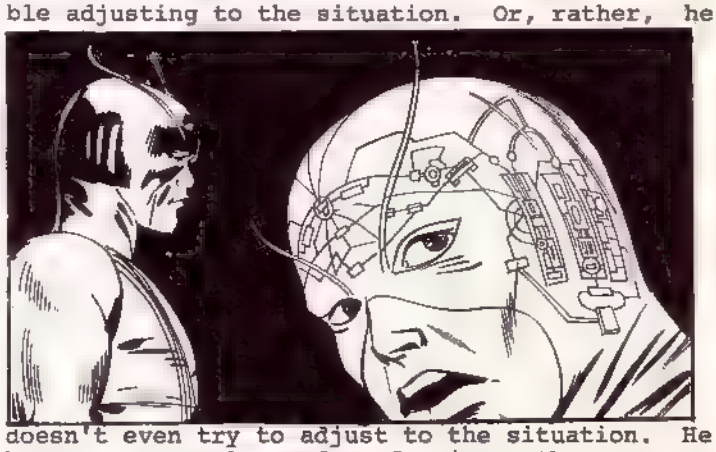
But before the Avengers stage is turned over to these medical problems of Goliath's and what adjustments he is able to make to them, one bit of old business remains--the long-running battle between the confused Captain America and quick-tempered, heartsick Hawkeye. The end of hostilities is brought about with the return from the "dead" of Hawkeye's supposedly-murdered love,the beautiful Black Widow--healed, brainwashed, and being used by the Communists to defeat the Avengers.

When Hawkeye hears that Natasha is alive he disregards Cap's warning that she has been brain washed and speeds to the castle she used as her headquarters during her previous stay in America before. The archer finds her with her "partners in crime", the Swordsman and Power Man and, rather stunned by his love's betrayal, Hawkeye gets himself captured--a fate which also befalls Captain America, Quicksilver, and Scarlet Witch in short order.

The entrance of Goliath changes things and while the giant Avenger is battling Power Man... and the Swordsman, the Wasp is opening the gates of the dungeon where the other Avengers had been imprisoned. With the combined power of the team against them, the villains seem doomed to defeat and capture, despite the exit which Black Widow, still brainwashed, opens up for them. Hawkeye--ready with an arrow to seal off their escape--is stopped by the Black Widow throwing herself into the line of fire. Hawkeye cannot fire at her... His arms slowly slump to his side as the trio is escaping. And for the first time, Cap begins to understand the archer's loss. The feud is over. With a few comforting words, Cap has done more--more than all the angrily-spoken words of weeks gone by.

Hawkeye's discomfort is short-lived, though as he requests and receives permission to tackle the Black Widow and her partners alone and to,as he puts it, "square things in my own way." In a furious battle, the archer keeps Power Man busy long enough to decisively defeat the Swordsman--Only to be attacked from behind by the villain's powerful partner. The sight of her love in danger snaps Natasha out of her brainwashed condition and, with her help, Hawkeye escapes from Power Man and renders him unconscious. For a period, we can leave our amazing archer and lovely Black Widow. They are now free from trouble--if only temporarily. Not so Henry Pym.

Even after the initial shock of learning he will have to remain a ten-foot freak for the remainder for the rest of his life, Hank has trouble adjusting to the situation. Or, rather, he



doesn't even try to adjust to the situation. He becomes extremely moody and rejects the company of his fellow Avengers and even of Janet. During his battle with the Swordsman and Power Man, Goliath is direct and to the point of being brutal to everyone. When the fight is finsihed, again he walks off by himself, saying that he'll catch up later. "I wouldn't fit...in the car..anyway" he says.

Still wallowing in self-pity when we see him next, the former Giant-Man has yet to do so much as thing one to help himself. When he sees some newspaper clippings about an old college professor doing work in South America on the artificial growth of body cells, Goliath gets an air car and, without informing the other Avengers, takes off--leaving Jan near-frantic. However, his expedition does serve a purpose. It is obvious he has done some intense soul-searching on his way to South America. And when he runs into the mysterious People of the Flame, an underground society that worships a mammoth cobalt fire, Henry realizes how much he has missed being an active Avenger. Like Captain America and the fleet-and swift Quicksilver when they each thought they'd have to fight the futuristic forces of Kang, unaided--Goliath now knows how much the Avengers--his fellow heroes--mean to each other and to the world.

Naturally, the Avengers have no intentions, at all, of letting their giant member do all the fighting and, within a matter of hours, they are with him against the fanatical People of the cobalt Flame. When the flame flares out of check, Hawkeye manages to detonate hidden explosives to snuff out the fire forever. The two sides warring for control of the flame stop battling. for there is nothing now to fight for. They stand--numbly--as the Avengers and Goliath's former old professor leave the underground kingdom.

In the returning air-car, Goliath gets his first shove in the direction which will eventually lead to his being cured. When the professor himself sees that he can't help Goliath, he suggests the Avengers track down another scientist. "The only other man who might help you is--Henry

Pym!"

When the Avengers return to headquarters, a depressed Goliath is quickly brought out of this self-pity thing by Captain America, who has Hank realize that he himself has to solve his problem as an Avenger! Within what must be a very brief time, Hank has set up an over-sized lab and begun the search for a cure. He also evidently is in stock of some giant lab coats, etc., tailored for him, probably at the the request of the ever fashion-conscious Janet Van Dyne. Finally, with Tony Stark's assistance, Hank has found himself a top-notch teammate, Bill Foster. For the very first time since returning to the Avengers, Goliath is at the full height of his capabilities, something his enemies will have much cause to be regretting shortly.

When Bill Foster is beaten by the Sons of the Serpent and Cap is captured by the same slimy snakes, Goliath assumes command of the Avengers and proceeds to destroy the Serpents' insidious scheme. It is on this case that we can see why, in more recent days, Ultron-5 would consider Hank Pym the Avenger most dangerous to his evil plans. For not only does Goliath prove that he is a master strategist, but he also demonstrates his ability to make adjustments to his original plans with lightning speed when the situation so requires. (In laymen's terms--He thinks fast on his feet in a pinch.) Before long, the Sons of the Serpent have been soundly defeated.

In many ways, it's heartwarming to watch as the Avengers regroup after polishing off the nefarious Serpents. Though not quite the human he acted like in his first appearance, Goliath now seems flushed with confidence. Wouldn't you be if you had just led a team of the world's greatest heroes to victory over a menace threatening, to split America asunder? Henry returns to his search for a cure for his condition and, for the first time, we feel confident that this time, he will succeed. Indeed, even in his super-heroing Hank shows an almost insufferable confidence. As he battles the Living Laser, it is almost laughable. Goliath disposes of the villain in almost as little as four pages without any assistance--whatsoever. It's just short of disgusting---how easy he makes it all look.

The battle doesn't go quite as well the second time the group takes on the Living Laser but then, this time the Laser has the power of a rather small country, the population of which seem to be mostly revolutionaries of one kind or another. He is also holding the Wasp captive, and it throws Goliath's timing off when the giant Avenger meets the Laser alone for the second encounter. However, the Laser (and the other Avengers for that matter) is taken somewhat by surprise when Goliath reveals the result of his and Bill's latest experiment by shrinking out of his bonds and putting an end to the Laser's schemes, by wrecking the mechanism of a mammoth laser gun from within, causing the villain to be battered, into unconsciousness in the following explosion.

With Goliath's powers at their peak and Pietro and Wanda returning from a vacation (They'd gone to seek out a specialist to restore powers they felt were waning) which lasted the length--throughout the issues--of the Avengers' battles with the People of the Flame, the Serpents, and the deadly Living Laser, the world's mightiest team of heroes now seem ready to take on anyone or anything. But, as always, one's future holds some surprises...

TO BE CONTINUED!

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MARVEL NEWS

Once again, it's artist-switching time! JOHNNY ROMITA switches from pencilling *Fantastic Four* to pencilling *Spider-Man*. And since that leaves a vacancy on the F.F. pencils JOHN BUSCEMA steps in to pencil the F.F.. John can't, however pencil both F.F. and *Avengers* in addition to *Thor*, so SAL BUSCEMA steps in to pencil *The Avengers*--which means that a new penciller has to be found for *Sub-Mariner*! Since GIL KANE is no longer pencilling *Spider-Man*, he's elected! [DID YOU EVER GET THE FEELING YOU WERE GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES?] So here's how it all shapes up: John Buscema on *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*, inked by JOE SINNOTT; Johnny Romita pencilling and inking *Spider-Man*, Sal Buscema drawing *The Avengers* and Gil Kane handling *Sub-Mariner*. Confusing, isn't it?

SOL BRODSKY has left Marvel. For years, Brodsky has been the Production Manager, busily seeing that everything got to the printers on time. He has left to form a firm that will be producing special magazines. His replacement is JOHN VERPOORTEN.

Two-thirds of the *Sgt. Fury* creative team, GARY FRIEDRICH and JOHN SEVERIN, have departed from Marvel for different reasons. Gary will be working on some books and John is doing some work for another company. In their absence, AL KURZROK has taken over writing the Sarge and DICK AYERS has inked a few issues by himself, to be followed by inking by SYD SHORES.

Big changes are coming in the pages of *Captain America*! The title of the magazine, for one thing, will soon read *Captain America and the Falcon*! GENE COLAN and TOM PALMER do the artwork and a certain smiling editor handles the script, as always.

Silver Surfer has been discontinued. The eighteenth issue was the last and pages done for the issue after will be incorporated into an upcoming *Hulk* story.

However, the Surfer could return--as might Captain Marvel in some of Marvel's new split books. More books like *Amazing Adventures* and *Astonishing Tales* are on the way! Coming soon will be a new book featuring Dr. Strange and the Iceman!

QUICK SCOOPS: DON HECK and JOE GAUDIOSO continue to handle *Iron Man*, although a few of GEORGE TUSKA'S issues will sneak in there. The title of *Chamber of Darkness* is changed to *Monsters on the Prowl*. RICHARD BUCKLER has been working on a new strip about a boy raised by the wolves, entitled *Man-Wolf*--no spot has been chosen for it yet but it will appear in the not too distant future. Silver Surfer and Hulk will be appearing several times in upcoming issues of *Sub-Mariner*...[AIR, LAND, AND SEA--GET IT?] X-Men and Nick Fury will both be appearing in 48-page bi-monthly magazines which reprint their earlier adventures--sort of on an experimental basis, as new material may be done later in both magazines.

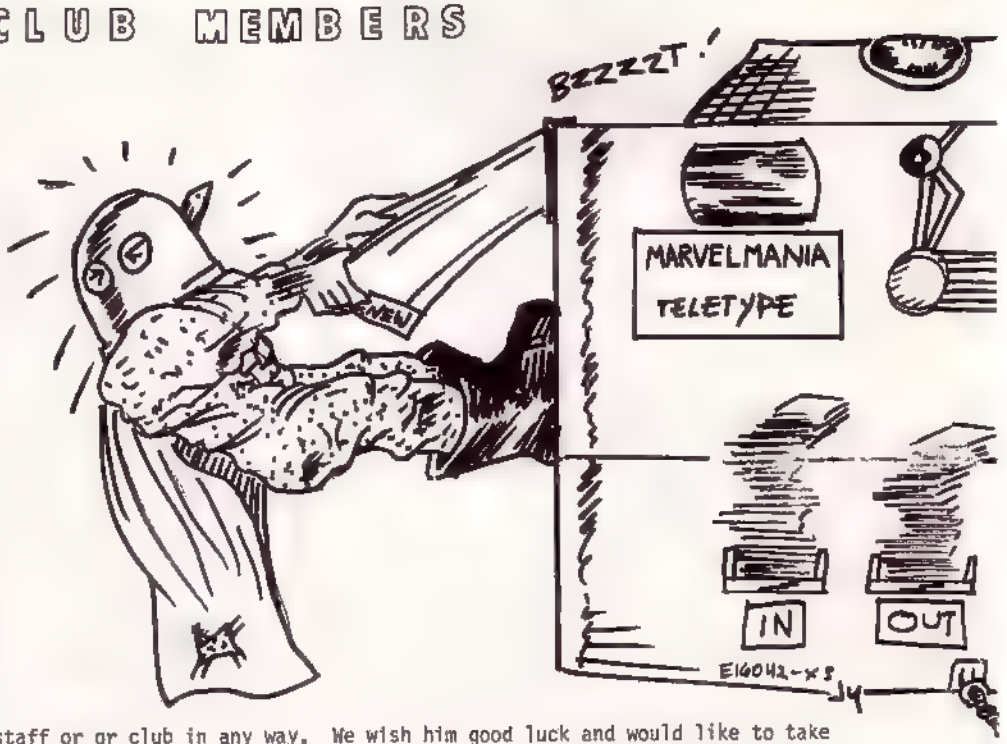
In case you weren't aware, *Spoof* was only a one-shot and was dropped after that one issue because foreign countries--whose Marvel fans are important also--weren't interested in the material. Based on the reaction to the first issue, though, another humor comic could be launched.

Everybody's writing *Daredevil* now. Since Gary Friedrich left, everyone has been pitching in to script the comic--It may wind up at the end written by ROY THOMAS once more.

In conclusion, we'd like to call your attention to the coming covers displayed on the opposite page and to thank Roy Thomas for all his help compiling this section. Roy just returned from a European vacation, fit as he good be and ready to get back to the typewriter. That about does it this issue for comicdom's answer to Rona Barrett--so hang front and face loose! (or was it the other way around..?)

MARVELMANIA

ATTENTION CLUB MEMBERS



As you will note, we have made some changes in our Staff (Editorial) of our peerless periodical. We feel an explanation is in order along with a statement on why this issue was late getting to you. To start with, the issue submitted by our previous editor was not acceptable and had to be re-edited and re-printed. Sorry frantic ones!!! Also it turns out that the former editor of our Monthly Mag has shifted his loyalties elsewhere. You guessed it.. Our competitor.Needless to say he will no longer be editing our Mag, nor will he be connected with our staff or or club in any way. We wish him good luck and would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his help on our first 3 issues. Without him we would have had to choose someone else for those issues..Maybe one of you out in fandom....But Now.....

all of us here at H.Q. and all of you out there in our loyal ranks can have the type of Mag that we originally had planned to have. That is to have a fanzine produced by the club members, as a joint club effort, giving you members a chance to do your thing and share in the feeling that you are really a part of the greatest club to hit this old world of ours since Irving Forbush lost his pot. Now the glory goes out to all of you who have put our mag on the map, you know who you are, and it also gives the rest of you your chance to show all your brother maniacs what you are capable of. We have had great cooperation from our membership in putting our mag together and thats why we have the largest and best Fanzine in Fandom. New Staffers are fearlessly on the job and are going to put out the effort necessary to even outdo ourselves.

Now is your chance, all you aspiring Editors, Writers, and Artists to see your work in print and share in the rewards of fandoms recognition towards its greatest talents. Part of your new staff will be selected from our ranks. For example: Maybe one of you out in Andila,Ohio will be the Staff Editor for Dooms Dispatch, or maybe one of you in Namore, Florida will be our Trading Corner Editor. All of you who know you have it put together and have the necessary abilities to handle an article each month or a section of the Fanzine each month, don't wait. Now is your time to stand up and be counted. All of you can help with your suggestions and your work such as you have submitted since the beginning.

We are changing the format of the Mag also. Upcoming features to wind you up and set your hearts ablaze like a Science Fiction section each month, a comic strip each month, drawn by the best in fandom, and other goodies to make you all true believers.

So, face front, Division Editors openings are awaiting those who can cut the mustard. Send your qualifications, along with a completed section you have done, ready for publication. Also send us samples of what you would like to do or handle in the fanzine each month. We hope to alternate some of the columns each month to give all of you a chance to affix your names and work to the hallowed ranks of fandom. Those with the best work and the best ideas will have permanent columns.. Send all goodies to Dept. MM P.O.B. 718 Culver City, Calif.

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15¢
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THE AVENGERS
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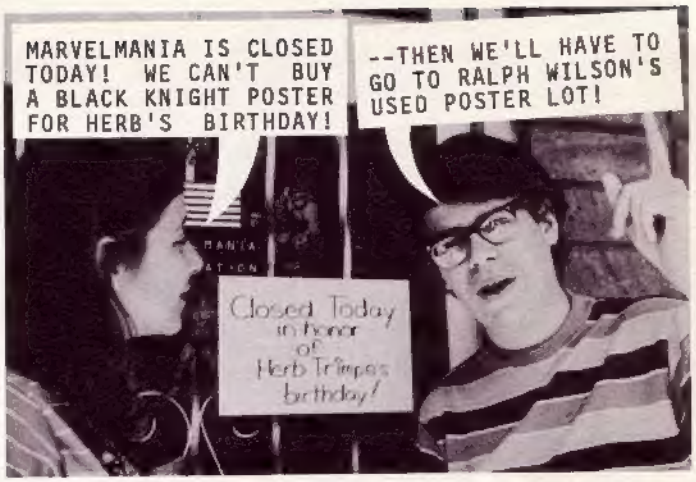
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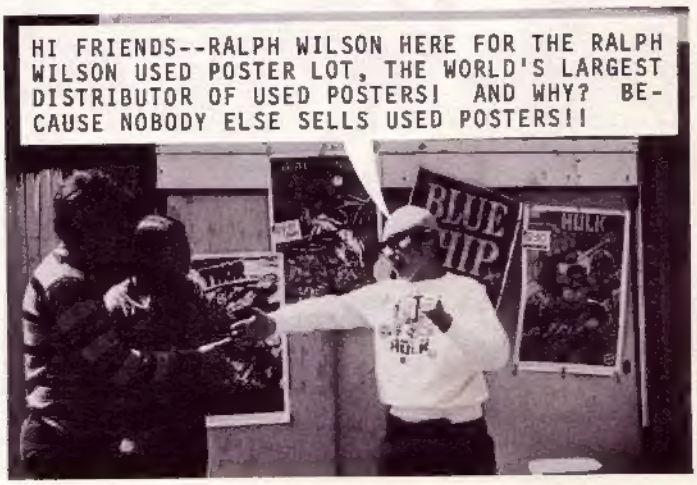
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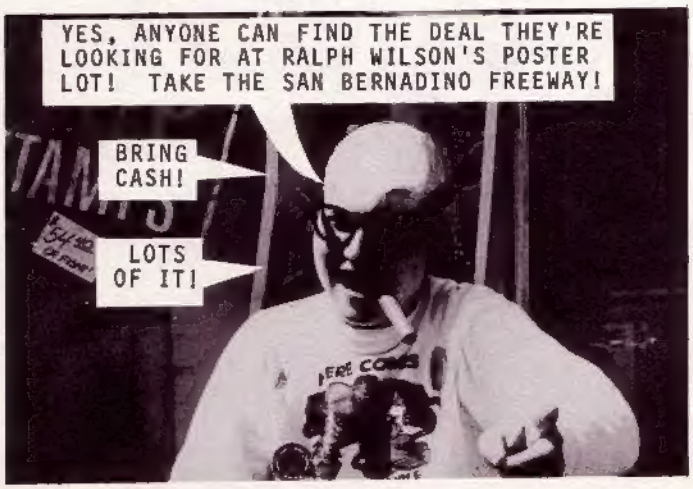
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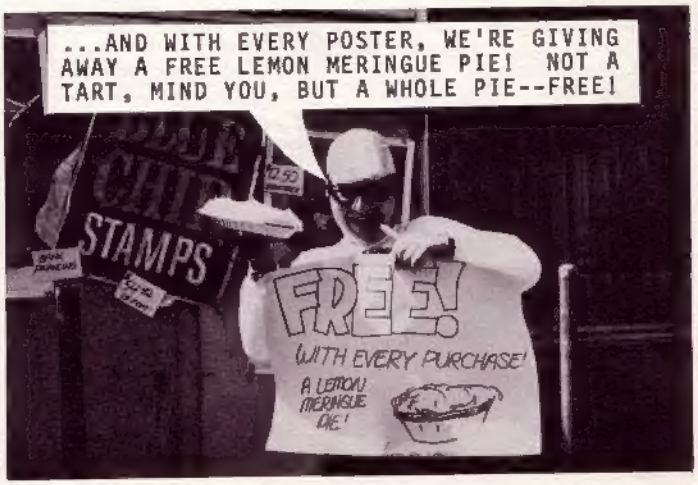
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Great authors are constantly being asked to explain what their work means. To date, not one person has asked me that about Marvelmania Magazine--which either means I've made the message painfully apparent or none of you think there is one. If the former be true, you can skip this paragraph. If, however, it is the latter, here--for posterity--is that message to you all...

This magazine arose as a Labor of Love. It rose as an expression of love for comic books and the crazy world which surrounds them. And it rose so that we could communicate--all of us who share that love.

That may not be much of a message but it's all I've got to offer.

--Mark Evanier
August, 1970

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